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Vikings in the South

Voyages to Iberia and the Mediterranean

Ann Christys

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First published 2015

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: HB: 978-1-47421-376-9
PB: 978-1-47421-375-2
ePDF: 978-1-47421-378-3
ePub: 978-1-47421-377-6

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Series: Studies in Early Medieval History

Typeset by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk

Contents

List of Illustrations vii
Preface and Acknowledgements ix

1 Introduction: Don Teudo Rico Defeats a Viking Raid 1

2 From the Encircling Ocean 15

3 So the Story Goes 29

4 A Mediterranean Adventure 47

5 Waiting for the Barbarians 65

6 The Wars of Santiago and Cordoba against Vikings 79

7 Conclusion: From Charter and Chronicle to Saga 95

Appendix 1: Glossary of Histories and Historians 105
Appendix 2: Timeline 109
Abbreviations 111
Bibliography 113
Index 131

List of Illustrations

0.1 The first expeditions xii
0.2 The Iberian peninsula xii
0.3 Galicia xiii
1.1 The Luarca plaque 2
1.2 Santa María del Naranco, Oviedo 10
5.1 *Ribāṭ* of Monastir 72
5.2 River Miño at Tuy 74
5.3 The Torres del Oeste 76
5.4 Replica Viking ships at Catoira, Ría de Arousa 77
6.1 Madīnat al-Zahrā’ 89
6.2 The Eastern Gate, Madīnat al-Zahrā’ 90

Preface and Acknowledgements

Several years ago, I spent a halcyon afternoon sailing or, to be more truthful, becalmed in a replica Viking ship with a group of eminent scholars of the Viking Age who were meeting at the Roskilde Ship Museum. Peter Sawyer suggested that, as I had studied the Latin and Arabic historiography of medieval Iberia, I might look at the evidence for Vikings in the peninsula. Peter's request was prompted by the 'Bibliographia Normanno-Hispanica' published the year before in the *Saga Book*. He was conscious that treatment of Iberia in general histories, including his own *Oxford History of the Vikings,* was brief. In her chapter on the Vikings in Francia, Jinty Nelson had noted that:

> Occasionally Vikings ventured far beyond the Carolingian realms. In 844 Galicia and al-Andalus were raided. In 859 (according to the annals of St-Bertin for that year) 'Danish pirates made a long sea-voyage, sailed through the straits between Spain and Africa and then up the Rhône. They ravaged some towns and monasteries and made their base on an island called the Camargue.' Muslim sources of the tenth century and later record other episodes on this voyage: al-Andalus was raided, and then the little Moroccan state of Nakur, whose royal women were carried off, then handed back after ransoms were paid by the amir of Córdoba; 'more than forty ships' were lost on the way home; and, perhaps a final success on the same expedition, the king of Pamplona was captured and ransomed in 861 for 60,000 gold pieces. A basis of historical fact thus underlies the epic Mediterranean journey described in the later medieval Hiberno-Norse version of *Ragnar's Saga*. All this was spectacular but exceptional.
>
> (Sawyer 1997: 29–30)

Hispanists are used to being exceptional, to existing in the margins of general histories of the Middle Ages. Jinty's exemplary summary of the more important Viking exploits in the South and the intriguing stories attached to them was a further incitement to take up the challenge to bring these Vikings into the main body of the text.

I have used Iberia as shorthand for what is now Spain and Portugal and moved towards consistency in the spelling of personal and place names reproduced from a wide variety of sources. Place names in modern Spain, Portugal and North Africa are given in the spelling familiar in English. Arabic names are transliterated according to the practice of the *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Old Norse names are given in the form common in modern English, which Peter used in the *Oxford History of the Vikings*. I have consulted nearly all the Latin and Arabic sources in the original language, but the Scandinavian sources only in translation. I have cited all the sources in English, sometimes making minor changes in the spelling of place and personal names. All the translators are credited; other translations are my own. A few terms and phrases are also cited in the original; to do this for all the passages cited would have made the book too long. Each of the primary sources is cited by the name of the author, if known, and/or a short form of the work's title and is listed under this form in the bibliography. The manuscript and publication history of the works of Ibn Ḥayyān is complicated, so I added the years covered by each edition. An appendix gives an annotated list of the most important sources. Readers looking for more detail will find entries for many of these sources in the *Encyclopaedia of the Medieval Chronicle*. Linehan (1993) wrote a comprehensive survey of peninsular historiography in Latin and Romance. No single volume on the Arabic historians of the peninsula has yet been published, but there are several useful introductions to Islamic historiography in general, including Khalidi (1994) and Robinson (2003). Collins (2012) surveyed the history of the peninsula for the period covered in this book.

For academic and other reasons I have taken a long time to fulfil Peter's commission. I have not written on Vikings before, and in the research for this book I incurred many debts. Those who answered specific questions, offered bibliographical advice and helped me to clarify my thoughts include Lesley Abrams, Chris Callow, Juan Antonio Estévez, Clemens Gantner, Alaric Hall, Catherine Hills, Jesús Lorenzo, Sam Ottewill-Soulsby, David Peterson, Carl Phelpstead, Else Roesdahl and Roger Wright. Wendy Davies and Graham Barrett were my consultants on the charters and the 'Bucknell/Woolstone group' pondered over the *Laudomanes*. Roger Wright and Ian Wood translated some of the Latin and John Wreglesworth tried to improve the accuracy of my use of the Latin sources. I am grateful to Joyce Hill for her specialist help with

the saga material in the concluding chapter. John Hunt drew the maps and Ian Wood took the photographs.

A constellation of scholars read the book in draft. They gave me advice on its overall shape, and detailed criticism. So my particular thanks go to Wendy Davies, Niels Lund, Jinty Nelson, Peter Sawyer, Pauline Stafford, Ian Wood, John Wreglesworth and Roger Wright and to Bloomsbury's anonymous readers. They have made great improvements, but the end result is, unfortunately, still my own.

Studying to postgraduate level in two fields, I enjoyed much good fortune. My parents, Cynthia and John Hill, encouraged me towards a much better education than they enjoyed. A benevolent state not only paid for my medical studies, but subsidised my return to education twenty years later. Ian Wood supervised my postgraduate study of medieval Iberia and he has been a constant source of information, advice and encouragement ever since. The state no longer being benevolent, this book is dedicated to Ian, to my father and in memory of my mother.

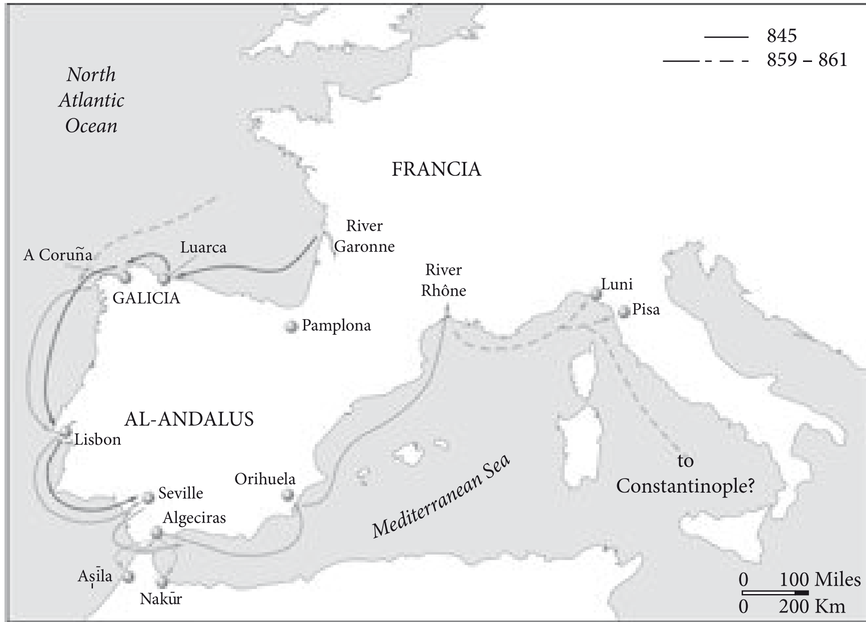

Figure 0.1 The first expeditions.

Figure 0.2 The Iberian peninsula.

Figure 0.3 Galicia.

1

Introduction: Don Teudo Rico Defeats a Viking Raid

In the fishing port of Luarca, near Gijon on the northern coast of Spain, nineteenth-century houses cluster the hillside overlooking the harbour. On one of the walls, a row of colourful plaques represents significant moments in the town's history. The first shows a local hero repelling a band of sea-raiders, who are easily identifiable as Vikings by their horned helmets (Figure 1.1). The caption reads: 'In the year 842, Vikings came ashore at Los Cambarales and were driven off by the men of Valdes, led by their lord Don Teudo Rico of Villademoros, who with his own mace killed the Viking chief.' Here, with a little artistic and chronological licence, Luarca commemorates what may be the first Viking landfall in the Iberian peninsula.

After at least one more attack on this coast, the Viking band sailed south towards Muslim Spain, al-Andalus. A historian writing in Arabic, Ibn Idhārī, described their appearance off the coast in colourful prose that matches Luarca's plaque:

> Vikings (*Majūs*) arrived in about 80 ships. One might say they had, as it were, filled the ocean with dark red birds, in the same way as they had filled the hearts of men with fear and trembling. After landing at Lisbon, they sailed to Cadiz, then to Sidonia, then to Seville. They besieged this city, and took it by storm. After letting the inhabitants suffer the terror of imprisonment or death, they remained there seven days, during which they let the people empty the cup of bitterness.
>
> (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 88–89, trans.: Stefánsson: 35–36)

We can picture Viking long-ships coming over the horizon, their square red sails billowing. The passage has a note of dramatic irony, for the inhabitants of al-Andalus may not have known what to expect. To modern readers, the panic

Figure 1.1 The Luarca plaque.

that Ibn Idhārī evoked recalls the sack of Lindisfarne half a century earlier, which Alcuin (d.804) lamented in his letter to abbot Higbald (Alcuin, trans.: 72). Alcuin was in contact with eyewitnesses to the Viking onslaught. Ibn Idhārī, on the other hand, saw Vikings only in his mind's eye. We know very little about him except that he was a judge in Fes who compiled a history of al-Andalus and the Maghreb in Marrakesh early in the fourteenth century (Martos 2009). Ibn Idhārī is one of the more remote witnesses to the Viking Age. He copied some of his information from earlier accounts that still survive, but much of the detail of his narrative is unique to this historian. Although it is not as anachronistic as the horned helmets of Luarca's plaque, it is equally difficult to read as an account of 'what actually happened'.

Modern scholars have made far less of references to Vikings in the written sources for Iberia and the Mediterranean than they have of snatches of information about those who travelled to other parts of Europe and beyond. The dominant conflict in Iberia during the whole of the Early Middle Ages was, of course, that between the Christian north and al-Andalus. Its importance is reflected in the peninsula's historiography and it coloured both Christian

and Muslim writings on Vikings. It also generated a significant quantity of material on Vikings written in Arabic, which has perhaps proved a bridge too far for scholars of the Viking Age, who need to handle material from a wide variety of languages and cultures. Most of the sources have long been available in editions and translations. In 1881, the Dutch Arabist Reinhart Dozy translated into French the most important Arabic sources and put them side by side with passages from Latin chronicles and charters that seem to refer to the same events (Dozy 1881, vol.2: 250–315). This dossier of sources was the basis for collections in Arabic (Seippel 1896, vol.1, translated into Norwegian in Birkeland 1954), in English (Stefánsson 1908–1909, from the French of Dozy) and most recently and comprehensively in Spanish (Morales 2004); in these collections the reader can find longer versions of most of the passages cited in this book. Although later scholars added a few details, Dozy's work represented the state of scholarship on Vikings in Iberia for more than a hundred years. The Arabic sources pose challenges that appear at first glance to be unique. Most of what we know about Vikings in al-Andalus and the Maghreb was set down centuries after the events described, often elaborated with implausible details and anecdotes. The result can be a sort of Arabian Nights re-telling; it is literature but, to our eyes at least, not history. Even the accounts of travellers such as Ibn Fadlan, who memorably described a Viking ship burial, and Ibn Ḥawqal, who visited al-Andalus *c.* 949, cannot be regarded simply as reportage (Montgomery *c.* 2010). The Latin sources appear to be more reliable, since they are usually earlier and more laconic than those in Arabic. Yet Latin sources were also subject to reworking. Christian writers in Iberia may have exaggerated the depredations of Vikings, just as the monks of Northern Europe may have done and for the same reasons – to attract patrons for the reconstruction of churches and monasteries. Latin hagiographers and chroniclers also gave to the Scandinavian raiders a role in new versions of history that reflected recent ideology and current political concerns. Vikings in the South also attracted the attention of the saga writers. Writing in the cold north, they seem a world away from Ibn Idhārī in Morocco. In the twenty-first century, we can juxtapose these different traditions, to their mutual illumination.

The primary purpose of this book is to integrate the Vikings in the South into general histories of the Viking Age. It focuses on the ninth and tenth centuries, but the concluding chapter extends the study to the twelfth century.

Vikings are defined as the men of Scandinavian origin who figure prominently in the history of Western Europe as raiders, conquerors and colonizers. Balanced against the search for these facts is an emphasis on the process of rewriting Vikings. Later versions of events may be sometimes given the same attention as earlier and apparently more reliable narratives. This approach reminds us of the pitfalls of interpretation posed by those episodes for which only late records survive. Stories are included that are almost certainly untrue, because they reflect attitudes to Vikings in the Middle Ages and later – and because modern commentators have been unwilling to discount them. Thus today two of the best-known 'facts' about Vikings in the South are that they made cheese (Lévi-Provençal 1950–1953, vol.1: 224; Aguadé 1986) and that a poet from Umayyad Cordoba served as ambassador to a Viking court (Allen 1960; González 2002b). The structure of the book is both chronological and thematic. The raiders are labelled 'Vikings', even though none of the medieval authors writing about the Iberian peninsula used this term. 'Viking' is a shorthand, and will usually be accompanied by the actual term used in the source under discussion. This strategy will be justified by the first, thematic, chapter, which is an excursus on the names that medieval authors writing in Latin or Arabic used for sea-raiders. These names reflected beliefs about the origins of the raiders that were rarely, if ever, based on eyewitness accounts. Readers wishing to go straight to the narrative should begin with Chapter 3, which uses reports of the earliest raids to illustrate the way in which stories about Vikings were passed on through chains of chronicles in Arabic, Latin and Romance. Chapter 4 takes the narrative through the expedition of 859–61 and situates Viking activities in the Mediterranean in the wider context of Mediterranean piracy. In the ninth and tenth centuries, efforts were made to defend the coasts of Iberia and the Maghreb against attack from the sea. These defensive measures and their relationship to later Viking raids are the theme of Chapters 5 and 6. A concluding chapter brings together the evidence for Viking attacks in the late tenth to the twelfth centuries, when at last there is documentary evidence to add to the narrative sources, but when Iberia and the Mediterranean were increasingly seen as saga destinations.

The framework upon which hung recollections of the Vikings in the South was one of 'normal Dark-Age activity' (Sawyer 1982: 196): trading and raiding by seafarers of various origins along the coasts of the Iberian peninsula. For

more than a millennium, ships from what are now France, Britain and Ireland sailed into the open sea to make landfall in Iberia (McGraill 1990: 46; Menéndez 2001: 71 and 101–102). The earliest trade was probably in minerals, for which Galicia, in the north-west corner of the peninsula, was famous in the Roman period. Gold and other minerals were exported via the river Navón and the port of *Flavionavia*; it not clear exactly where this was, but Luarca, which lay on the Roman road connecting Cantabria with Asturias and Galicia, is one of the possible candidates (Santos 1996: 82). Galicia was also praised for the fertility of its soil and for its horses. Archaeology shows a previously unsuspected vitality lasting into the seventh century, after which there was fragmentation, with the strengthening of local power, until Galicia was gradually incorporated into the kingdom of Asturias (Sánchez Pardo 2013). The coasts of Iberia attracted the attention of pirates based in Francia in the fourth and fifth centuries and perhaps earlier (Wood 1990: 94; Hayward 1991: 1).The western coast in particular could have been made for Vikings: it is indented with bays and creeks where they, like other seafarers, could shelter. There are islands to serve as bases for over-wintering. Several of the rivers were navigable by small vessels up to important settlements such as Seville and Cordoba in al-Andalus and Santiago de Compostela in the north. Coastal sailing in this region was not considered particularly hazardous. It was not far from Francia to Iberia, noted an eleventh-century chronicler, Adam of Bremen: 'from Brittany at Pointe de Saint Mathieu to Capo de Vares (La Coruña) near Santiago, three days and three nights; thence to Lisbon, two days and two nights' (Adam of Bremen Book 4: 99, trans.: 187). A century later, the geographer al-Idrīsī, emphasized the risk of sea-sickness, but praised the rivers of Galicia for their navigability. Leaving Santiago by water, he said, it took three days to Lisbon (Dubler 1949). The estimates may have been optimistic, but even the south of Iberia was within the scope of a summer campaign from Viking bases elsewhere in western Europe.

Yet some fifty years passed after the attack on Lindisfarne before Vikings turned towards Iberia. During this time, their depredations on the islands, coasts and waterways around the North Sea had intensified. It was Francia that provided the jumping-off point for the earliest expeditions to the South. Vikings are first recorded in the Frankish sources as traders in 777. In 810, they attacked Frisia, and they were soon arriving almost every year (Nelson 1997).

Some of these men may have been Norwegians from Vestfold, who attacked Nantes in 843 with 67 ships (Ermentarius: 301; *Annales Engolismenses* a.843). Their activities entered a new phase when they started to over-winter at the mouths of the Loire, and of the Garonne in Aquitaine. It was probably from a base on the Garonne that they sailed to the Iberian peninsula in 844, making the attacks commemorated at Luarca and by Ibn Idhārī. They returned in 859, again probably from Francia, and this time, after raids on Galicia and Lisbon, they sailed on through the Straits of Gibraltar and into the Mediterranean, where they harried the southern coasts of al-Andalus and Francia for up to three years, crossed to the Maghreb and may have sailed to Byzantium. More than a century seems to have elapsed before they returned in significant numbers, to threaten Santiago in the north and Lisbon, once again, in the south. These are the three principal phases of Viking activity in the peninsula. In the eleventh century, with the Christianization of Scandinavia and the settlement of Normandy, the Viking Age proper came to an end. Iberian charters and local chronicles, however, continued to record sporadic raiding going on into the twelfth century. In Scandinavia and Iceland, saga writers narrated the expeditions of 'Holy Vikings' (Phelpstead 2007): crusaders who sailed to Jerusalem from Scandinavia, attacking the coasts of Iberia on their way.

It is not easy to see what Vikings expected to gain. Elsewhere in Europe, Vikings made easy pickings from churches and monasteries whose founders sought isolation from the world, but had often found it, unwisely as it turned out, close to a navigable waterway. It is assumed that they sailed to Iberia with similar intent, but this is very difficult to document. The emphasis in recent Viking studies has been very much on material culture, especially the evidence for trading. The Iberian peninsula is very different in this respect. There is as yet no proof that Vikings came as traders, no emporia comparable to those excavated around the Baltic – although this may reflect the current state of archaeology. There is no material evidence for Viking settlement in the peninsula, although the written sources and toponyms hint at short periods of over-wintering. With the exception of fortifications that may have been erected in response to Viking attacks, there is very little archaeological evidence for their incursions – in any case, most of the fortifications, whether built by or against Vikings would have been constructed of earth and wood and do not

survive (Coupland 2014). There is some written evidence for raids on religious foundations in the north-west of the peninsula in a scattering of references, some better supported than others, to the rebuilding or re-foundation of monasteries and churches; these will be discussed in Chapter 6. Further south, there is less documented destruction, apart from damage to the mosques of Seville and Almeria. None of these reports can be corroborated by material remains. Two artefacts and a handful of tiny bones have been linked to Viking activity. Locals from O Vicedo in the extreme north-west of Galicia think that anchors uncovered by recent storms may be Viking (Pontevedra 2014). A small whalebone casket of Scandinavian manufacture survives in the treasury of San Isidoro, Leon, where it was reworked for use as a reliquary (cover picture). Unfortunately, the provenance of the casket is undocumented; it may have been donated by a pilgrim, arrived as a diplomatic gift or been collected by one of the donors to Leon (Roesdahl 2010a; 2010b; Martin 2006: 15, 45). Recently archaeologists have uncovered evidence that Viking ships may have travelled as far as the island of Madeira (Rando, Pieper and Alcover 2014). Fragments of mouse bone excavated at Ponta de Sao Lourenço, the earliest mouse populations to be found on the island, have been dated between 900 and 1036, long before the Portuguese conquest. Mitochondrial DNA sampled from the current mouse population shows similarities with the mice of Scandinavia and northern Germany, but not with those on the Portuguese mainland. Further analysis of this DNA supports the hypothesis that mice colonized Madeira from Viking ships. Scandinavian mice also scampered onto the shores of the North Atlantic (Jones *et al*. 2012). This line of research may eventually help to delineate Viking activity in Iberia and beyond – and we may hope for the discovery of more substantial archaeological finds.

During the early phases of Viking activity, the potential pickings of pirates may have been small. In the ninth century both the Islamic emirate of al-Andalus and the Christian kingdom of Asturias and Galicia in the north-west of the peninsula were still in the process of consolidating their control over their rivals in the long period of instability that followed the Muslim conquest of 711. The brilliance of Cordoba under the caliphs ʻAbd al-Raḥmān III (929–961) and al-Ḥakam II (961–976) has obscured the Umayyads' uncertain control of their realm before this period. The forces of the conquerors, who had briefly advanced almost to the north coast and to the frontier with Francia,

had retrenched in the later eighth and ninth centuries. They were unable to control Toledo, the former Visigothic capital, except for short periods. The Umayyads faced rivals in the shape of small rebel kingdoms based on cities such as Toledo and Merida, or around individuals such as the family known as the Banū Qāsi, who played a role in struggles against Vikings as well as against Cordoba, as we shall see. Andalusi armies fought annual summer campaigns against the Christian north, but until the tenth century, to little apparent effect. The wealth of the Umayyads is difficult to document, but may be indicated by fluctuations in the quantity and quality of Andalusi coinage. At the time of the first Viking raids there may have been only modest amounts of coinage in circulation. A few gold dinars were minted between 713 and 744–5 (Manzano 2006: 58–63). The emirs of the eighth and ninth centuries minted silver dirhams, but they were forced during times of insurrection to reduce their quantity or silver content (Manzano 2006: 311–316). Silver coins in large quantities, and a return to minting gold, are not attested until the ninth century. Very few Andalusi coins have been discovered in Scandinavia; the largest hoard, of 24 coins, was uncovered on Gotland (Morales 2004: 112–113). Although more than a quarter of a million Arabic coins have been discovered in the lands along the southern shores of the Baltic (Mäkeler 2005), none of them are Andalusi in origin. Umayyad coins are rarely found in Viking Age silver hoards; there is only one in the Cuerdale hoard, for example (Graham-Campbell 1992). Arabic coins from Iberia could have circulated as bullion, particularly in the period *c.* 910–*c.* 930. Metallurgical analysis of several hoards from northern England suggests that Arabic coins were also melted down into ingots, ornaments and hack-silver (Sheehan 1998, 2001). This process began in the Baltic region, using coinage obtained through trading along the Russian river system. Yet the Arabic silver that Scandinavians obtained in this way cannot be traced back to al-Andalus (Mäkeler 2005). The wealth of towns and cities in al-Andalus in the eighth and ninth centuries is obscure. Even for Cordoba, most of the evidence relates to the tenth century and later. Of the cities nearest the coast, Lisbon, apparently the first goal of Viking raids on al-Andalus, was clearly a desirable target. In 798, the Asturian ruler Alfonso II raided Lisbon and carried away booty, some of which he sent to Charlemagne (*Annales Regnum Francorum*: 102 and 104). Yet although Arabic geographers of the tenth century and later praised the fertility of the countryside

surrounding Lisbon, they rarely mentioned the town itself except in connection with Viking attacks. There is little archaeological evidence for urbanization, or for a port area, before the eleventh century (Amaro 1999; Torres, Gómez and Marcías 2007: 119; Bugalhao 2009). Further inland, but also a target for Vikings, Seville – the metropolis of the see of Baetica – was probably bigger than Lisbon. Little remains of the early-Islamic city, however, to corroborate this supposition; the impressive walls and mosque were constructed centuries later by the Almohads. In Cordoba, members of the elite owned rich fabrics, ivory caskets, fine metalwork and pottery, but they acquired most of these luxuries only in the last years before the collapse of the Umayyad caliphate early in the eleventh century. It is unclear whether the mosques of al-Andalus had much gold or moveable goods. Cordoba's Great Mosque held a copy of the Qur'an that was said to have belonged to the third caliph Uthman (Bennison 2007), but there are few references to other treasures. Across the Straits of Gibraltar, as we shall see, the ports of the Maghreb that Vikings raided were small and offered little booty to reward such a long journey.

The Christian kingdoms of Northern Iberia were equally slow to establish themselves. The most important of these, the Asturian kingdom based on Oviedo, had a complicated and fractious relationship with Galicia to the west, which was only intermittently under Asturian control. The Basque kingdom of Pamplona, sometimes known as Navarre, was another rival. Surviving Asturian buildings, such as the palace at Oviedo (Figure 1.2) are small. By the end of the ninth century, the kingdom of Asturias started to expand into Leon and Castile. In the tenth century, and in spite of the devastation of raids by the forces of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III and al-Manṣūr, the Leonese kings took more territory from the Umayyads, although only in retrospect could this be made to look like the beginning of the Christian recovery of the peninsula. The wealth of the kingdom began to accumulate. In the tenth century, some time after the supposed discovery of the body of St. James/Santiago in Galicia, pilgrims began to make their way to Santiago de Compostela, which grew up around his shrine (López 1988: 139). The Asturian church accumulated treasures, such as the crosses of Oviedo and Santiago, and the liturgical vessels and vestments listed in charters recording bequests or the transfer of church property. Yet the towns of the Christian north-west, even Santiago, were small, and may have been relatively poor. Clerics are rarely recorded as moving their wealth out of

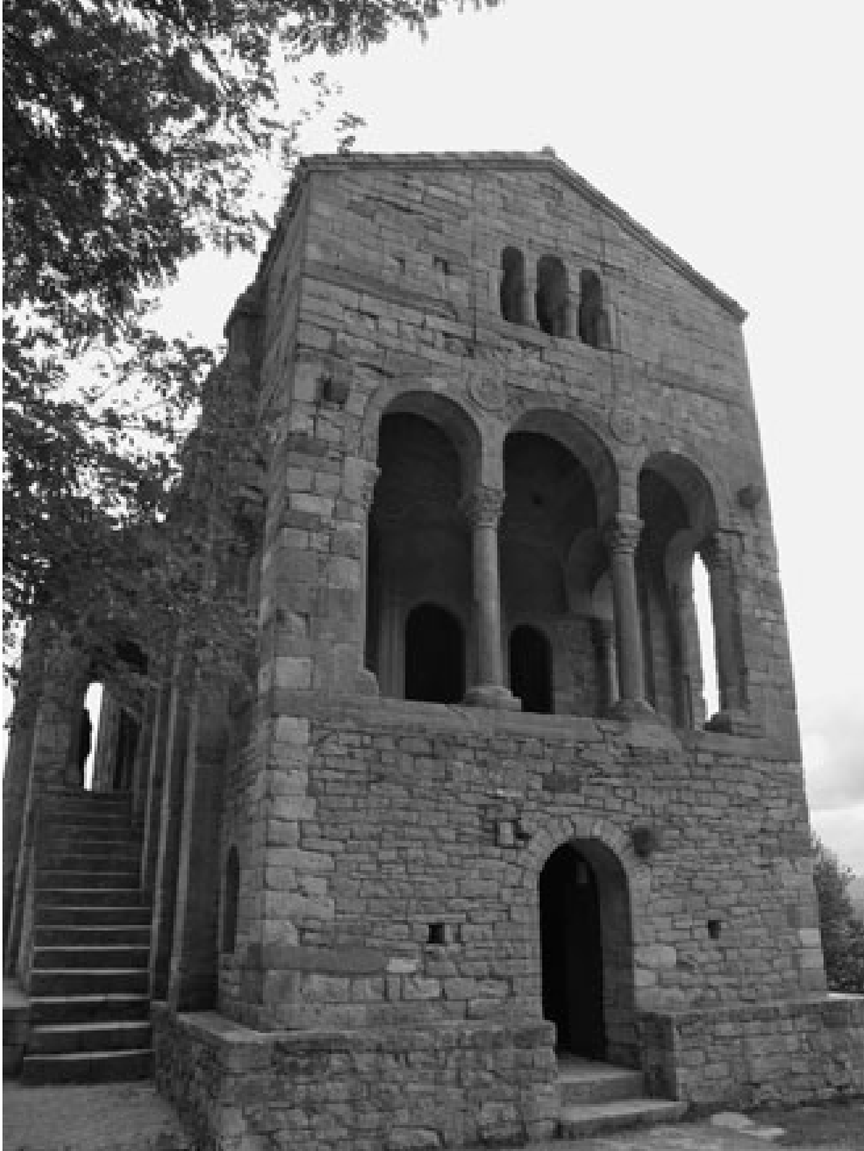

Figure 1.2 Santa María del Naranco, Oviedo.

the reach of pirates, in contrast to the situation in England and Francia at this period. Much later, in the twelfth century, the monks of Mondoñedo moved some ten miles inland. They may have done so because of the threat of seaborne attack (DHEE: 1717–1721), although this seems too late to be a response to

Vikings alone. Muslim pirates also harried the coasts of Galicia and Asturias. Andalusi Muslims made annual campaigns by land against the north, bringing back captives and booty. An Andalusi expedition destroyed the monastery of Cardeña in 953 and the bells of Santiago hung in the Great Mosque in Cordoba after al-Manṣūr's raid of 997. Even so, from the many accounts of these campaigns in both Christian and Muslim sources, it appears that the destruction of churches and monasteries was the exception rather than the rule (Collins 2012: 172). They may not have been an obvious target of Viking interest.

Yet there was one commodity that could be seized from even the poorest settlement: human beings. Accounts of Viking raids in the South emphasize the seizure and sometimes the ransoming of captives rather than the removal of goods and treasures. Slave raiding and trading was important to the early medieval economy of both east and west and occupied men of various origins (McCormick 2001). Unfortunately, most of the evidence comes from the eleventh century and later; for early medieval Iberia and the Mediterranean 'it is difficult to determine the identity, religion and geographical origin of either slavers or slaves' (Constable 1996: 266–267). Vikings traded in Slav captives, known as *Saqāliba*, with Islamic merchants in the East (Bolin 1968: 50). Ibn Khuradādhbih (*c.* 825–912), perhaps the earliest author writing in Arabic to mention people who could be Vikings, noted that merchants called *Rūs* traded in the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, transporting their merchandise by camel as far as Baghdad. These men travelled from Scandinavia via the Russian river system. Ibn Khuradādhbih did not record Vikings bringing slaves from Iberia to the East, although he mentioned Jewish slave traders in Baghdad who came from western Europe and al-Andalus via the coast of the Maghreb (Ibn Khuradādhbih: 154). *Saqāliba* were also traded in al-Andalus and the Maghreb (Mishin 1999: 103–109). Most of the slaves in al-Andalus, however, were Christians captured by Muslims in border campaigns. The existence of Viking slaving in the South rests precariously on references to captives in narrative sources and charters. A late and fragmentary source from Ireland referred to the 'Blue men', whom Vikings brought to Ireland from Mauretania; we assume they were black Africans (*Fragmentary Annals*: 163; Chapter 4). But slaving was never the main object of expeditions launched from the Viking settlement in Dublin and although it is attested in the ninth century, it did not become important until two hundred years later (Holm 1986). Captives acquired in

Iberia and the Maghreb may have been held for ransom rather than being traded elsewhere. Two eleventh-century charters from what is now Portugal document the sale of property to redeem debts incurred in ransoming women captured by Vikings (Pires 2011; see Chapter 7). According to the first, the ransom was paid in silver. In the second, the raiders left with a number of everyday items: clothing, a sword, a cow and some salt. Supplied with these provisions, they continued their voyage.

Although Vikings active in the South took little that was recognizably Iberian or Maghrebi back to their homelands, their exploits may have been commemorated in inscriptions. Runestones were erected in memory of Scandinavians who died 'in the south'; a stone at Stenkumin in Gotland mentions a man who 'dealt in furs in the south' and another in Uppsala cathedral refers to a man who 'died in the south' (Jansson 1987, trans.: 57, 73; Sawyer 2000: 119). None of the stones specify Iberia. Some or all of them could refer to men who travelled to Byzantium via Russia. Yet there is a hint that 'the south' might sometimes mean the Maghreb. The Gripsholm stone, a memorial to a member of Ingvar's expedition to Byzantium in 1040, says that 'They went gallantly for gold/And in the east fed the eagle. They died in the south in Serkland' (cited by Jesch 2005). The exact location of Serkland is unclear and will be discussed later, but it may be 'part of Africa' (Fagrskinna, trans.: 185). This may be corroborated by the inscription on a small sandstone implement now in the British Museum. The runes on this implement, which have been dated to the eleventh century, name four peoples or places: the Greeks (Byzantines); Jerusalem; Iceland; and Serkland. Page speculated that the rune-carver itemized 'Byzantium for trade, Jerusalem for pilgrimage, Iceland for settlement, the Middle East for adventure' (Page 1995: 12). In runic inscriptions Serkland 'has emblematic status as the south easternmost destination of the far-travelled Vikings' (Jesch 2005: 125). Wherever it was, Serkland was the last corner of the Viking world and the least memorialized.

To reconstruct the history of Vikings in the South, the emphasis has to be on the written record; this is also true for Francia before the Norman settlement. The main legacy of Viking activity in Iberia and the Mediterranean is a fund of narrative. Some of the stories have a core of truth, which the book will attempt to uncover, although it will not be easy. On the skeleton of sporadic references in chronicles and charters to attacks by seaborne raiders, medieval authors

constructed a role for Vikings in the histories of Christian and Muslim Iberia that sometimes became increasingly significant with time. They also recorded stories about Vikings whose factual vertebrae – if such ever existed – have collapsed beneath the weight of later accretions. This is a commonplace of Viking studies. I began with Don Teudo Rico and the Viking attack on Luarca – even though our hero may be an invention of the Early Modern period and thus outside the time frame of this book – because Don Teudo Rico serves as a synecdoche for those Iberians who faced Viking attacks. Luarca's plaque may recall a genuine raid, although 842 is perhaps two years too early (see Chapter 3). The people of Luarca seem to have held off Vikings until the 980s, when the port was abandoned; it was not resettled until the end of the thirteenth century. The family of Don Teudo Rico were prominent throughout the lean years, according to an account of their lineage written in 1654 by Diego Barreyro, King at Arms to Philip IV (Pérez de Castro 1981). The Rico family, said Barreyro, occupied the first house to be built after the repopulation of the port, in the quarter (Los Cambarales) that was named after the defeated Viking leader, and on the site of their previous house – and they had papers to prove it. Los Cambarales is today thought to be named after one of two pirates, one a Viking, the other a Berber, or for the cambaro, a shellfish (*Eco de Luarca* 8 May 1955, cited by Perez 1981: 245, n.5) and this part of the Rico family story could have been less than a century old when the genealogist recorded it. The antiquarian Prudencio de Sandoval (1553–1620), who may be the first to refer to Don Teudo (Adiciones a la Historia de los cinco Obispos: f.153, cited by Pérez 1981), was in the habit of taking his information from false chronicles written by one of his contemporaries (García Moreno 2013: 480, and n.1659). Nevertheless, Prudencio said that the ruins of the Rico family house were still visible in his own day. A generation later, and with a flourish of what Pérez labelled *hidalgomania* (the excessive glorification of one's ancestry) Barreyro pointed out that, leaving aside the nominative determinism of the name Rico (rich), the family were clearly related to Gothic heroes of the same name such as Alaric (Alarico in Spanish) and Theodoric, as well as to the many Asturian bishops whose names ended in –rico. The Rico coat of arms vaunted the family's participation in Spain's three pivotal victories against the Muslims: at Covadonga (*c.* 718, if it ever happened); at Las Navas de Tolosa (1212); and with Ferdinand and Isabella before Granada in 1492. Barreyro noted that the

defeat of Vikings was also represented on the shield, by the key to the Rico house in Luarca that Don Teudo successfully defended. Never completely overshadowed by Catholic Spain's greatest triumphs, Don Teudo's victory remained a keystone of family honour. In the Early Middle Ages too, the inhabitants of Iberia were proud to claim not only that they had fought Saracens, but that they had also driven off Vikings.

Vicarious fear of and fascination with Vikings, who continue to attract wide popular and scholarly interest, have been blamed for exaggerating their destructive effects on medieval society. Vikings did not come 'as a bolt from the blue'; they were not more violent, nor did they 'put people to death in particularly horrible ways' (Halsall 1992; 1998). But medieval writers feared that they might. Halsall argued that to understand why, when medieval societies faced the threat of violence from many sides, Vikings were placed in a category of their own, 'we have to conceive of the Viking attacks as a clash of cultures' (Halsall 1992: 6). The crimes of these warriors offended contemporary Christian norms of warfare. In Iberia, cultural plurality predated the advent of Vikings. Much scholarly effort in the last few years has been expended in discussing whether the cultures of Christianity and Islam did indeed 'clash' in the peninsula. What is clear is that the historians of Christian and Muslim Iberia did not record the past in the same way. Yet the same fear and fascination is palpable in both Christian and Muslim memories of Vikings in the South.

2

From the Encircling Ocean

Who were these 'Vikings' and where did they come from? Medieval writers used a variety of labels for the pirates who attacked the coasts of Iberia. Like their counterparts in Francia, Latin authors in Iberia usually labelled them 'Northmen' (*Normanni* and *gens Normannorum* or *Nordomannorum*); one version of the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*, compiled early in the tenth century, shows the *gens Nordomannorum* arriving 'from the northern ocean' (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 143). Writing in the middle of the eleventh century, Adam of Bremen noted that 'the Danes and the Swedes and the other peoples beyond Denmark are all called Northmen by the historians of the Franks (Adam of Bremen *History* 450: trans.: 195) . . . beyond Norway, which is the farthermost northern country, you will find no human habitation, nothing but ocean, terrible to look on, and limitless, encircling the whole world' (Adam of Bremen *History* 482, trans.: 215). Muslim authors also implied that the raiders came from the north, but they nearly always used the term *Majūs*, which, as we shall see, could also be used of almost anyone who was not a Muslim (Christys 2012). Arab geographers were fascinated by the sea whence they came, which they called the 'Encircling Ocean'. Adventurers from Lisbon sailed into this ocean, and although they were not expecting to drop off the rim of the world, no one knew how far the waters extended, or what lay beyond. It was said that an ambassador from the Umayyad court in Cordoba had braved the ocean for three days on a mission to a *Majūs* king. The aim of this chapter is to present Christian and Muslim perceptions of Vikings as they are reflected in the names that they used for them.

Although the Latin ethnonyms for Vikings are easier to explain than the Arabic *Majūs,* there is some ambiguity of spelling, which may have implications for the origins of Vikings in Iberia. In the earliest surviving Iberian reference to Vikings, the compiler of the *Chronicle of Albelda* called them *Lordomanni*

(*Crónicas Asturianas*: 175); a short continuation of the chronicle has *Lothomanni* (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 188). At least fourteen later sources, both histories and charters, used variants of this spelling. A charter recording a donation to the monastery of San Martin Pinario, in Santiago de Compostela, dated 2 January 966 mentioned the 'city of the *Loclimanos*' (San Martín Pinario: no. 8; López 1988: 225, n.340). An eleventh-century charter from Leon cites the *termino de Lordomanes* as one of the boundaries of a property (Leon cathedral, vol.4: 346 no.1128). Adjacent to the property it seems that there was, or had been, a Viking encampment. It is from this spelling beginning with the letter *L* that two toponyms in modern Spain and Portugal have been related to Viking occupation: Lodemanos, a village in the province of Leon on the border with Zamora (and a long way from the sea) and, more plausibly, Lordemäo, a suburb of Coimbra. The identification of *Lordomanni, Loclimanos* and others as *Normanni*, etc. and hence Vikings, whilst not certain, is convincing because of the way these terms are used in the sources. Yet this mutation is puzzling. In Romance – the spoken and then written language that developed from Latin in Iberia – it was common for *n* to mutate to *l*. It is, however, unusual to find an initial *N*- becoming initial *L*-; 'the Latin consonants in word-initial position were extremely stable, passing unchanged into Spanish in almost all instances' (Penny 2002: 94). Personal and place names were more likely than other usages to change their spelling, as the scribes may never have seen these names in written form and might resort to guesswork (Wright 2008). The hypothesis that there was a shift from *N*- to *L*- seems to be confirmed by a twelfth-century copyist who turned the *Nordomannorum gens* of the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 143), to *Lordomannorum gens* in his citation from the earlier chronicle (*Chronica Naiarense*: 108). More speculatively, the spelling with *L* might also connect Vikings in the South to Ireland, to 'the wild warriors of *Lothlind* sailing on a quiet sea' in a poem that a ninth-century Irish scribe added to the margin of a manuscript that he was copying (St. Gallen Stiftsbiliothek, Cod.Sang. 904, cited in Sharpe 2010). Variants on this ethnonym, including *Laithlind* and *Lochlainn* occur at least thirteen times in Irish annals and related texts, used to refer to Scandinavia, to Norway in particular (ní Mhaonaigh 1998; O'Corrain in Sawyer 1997: 87, 89–90 and 107). It is difficult to explain how Iberian scribes might have adopted an Irish usage, although we shall see that some of the Vikings who sailed to Iberia and North Africa were

said to have come from Ireland. Another designation, *Normani ac Frandenses*, which the *Cronicon Iriense* used for Vikings who attacked Santiago (ES vol.20: 606) remains totally unexplained.

Although the term *Majūs* had a wider range of meaning than *Normanni* and its variants, in the sources for al-Andalus it was used mainly for attackers from outside the peninsula. The Christians of al-Andalus were rarely called *Majūs* and conversely, a number of terms, such as *Kafirūn* (unbelievers) and *Mushrikūn* (idolators) were applied to the enemy in Northern Iberia but were rarely used of Vikings (Lapiedra 1997). The first convincing evidence for *Majūs* who are Vikings are the accounts of the raid on Seville in 844. The fact that the same events are noted in both the Latin and Arabic sources make us more confident that those labelled *Majūs* in the Arabic versions are what we would call Vikings. The additional details that writers in Arabic occasionally provide also help to identify such voyagers as Vikings. A passage from a *Book of Geography* attributed to al-Zuhrī noted that:

> Formerly, over [the great sea in the West] . . . many big ships sailed, which the people of al-Andalus called '*qarāqīr*'. These ships were capable of sailing backwards and forwards and had square sails. They were crewed by the people they called *Majūs*, who possessed a strength, courage and tenacity without equal for navigating the sea. When they appeared off the coast, the inhabitants fled towards the interior, in the grip of pure terror. These *Majūs* put to sea every sixth or seventh year. They assembled fleets of at least eighty ships, sometimes more than one hundred. All those whom they encountered at sea they overcame, took prisoner and carried off.
>
> (Seippel vol.1: 11)

Al-Zuhrī seems to have lived in Granada in the twelfth century (Ferhat, EI vol.2: 566). Several manuscripts of his *Book of Geography* survive and it was translated into Romance (Bramon 1985). It is not clear whether this was al-Zuhrī's own work, or simply a copy of an earlier text. Several of the manuscripts begin with the statement: 'Truly, I have copied this Geography from the Geography of al-Fazārī which was copied from the Geography of al-Ma'mūn ibn Ḥārūn al-Rashīd, in compilation of which ninety philosophers joined their efforts' (cited in Tolmacheva 1985). Al-Fazārī's identity is even more a mystery. But the reference to the Book of Geography attributed to the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn (813–833), credited with the translation of Greek scholarship into

Arabic (Gutas 1998), takes us back to the beginnings of geographical writing in the Islamic world (Miquel 1967: 73), to which we should turn in order to interpret Arabic descriptions of the Encircling Ocean and its wayfarers.

Islamic scholars took over the Ptolemaic conception of the universe, in which the sublunary world was a sphere, whose inhabitable portion was divided into seven latitudinal zones that began slightly north of the Equator and ended in the perpetual darkness of the far North. The movement of the planets governed the physical characteristics of each zone and this in turn affected the characteristics of its inhabitants. Beyond the inhabited world lay the Encircling Ocean (*al-baḥr al-muhiṭ*), girdling the world like a Green Sash (*al-ṭawq al-akhdar*) that stretched beyond Thule (Picard 1997a: 29 and 31). An alternative name for it – the Tenebrous Ocean (*al-baḥr al-muzhlim*) – invoked the northernmost of the Greek climes (Al-Mas'ūdī *Tanbih*: 72–77). Many geographers had never seen some or all of the lands they described; their writings were based on the Qur'an and other texts. They were steeped in *adab*, a common cultural heritage of secular writing that included poetry and fantastic ethnography such as the description of the island of Waqwaq where men grew on trees. Thus a poetic *topos* that compared a ship to a dark-hued camel with wings like a bird (Abd Alghāni 2007) may have been in Ibn Idhārī's mind when he used the simile dark red birds for Viking ships. Each geographer struggled towards his own synthesis of incommensurable genres of knowledge (Miquel 1967, vol.1: 154; Touati 2010: 119–155). It is not surprising that such works can be contradictory and confusing.

Andalusi authors probably had at least an elementary conception of regional geography. Al-Zuhrī acknowledged the Vikings' voyage around northwest Iberia with the statement that '*Majūs* ships that harassed the Straits [of Gibraltar came from] the land of Galicia which is on the shores of the great sea in the West' (Seippel vol.1: 11). Yet the scholastic view of the Encircling Ocean prevailed over actual experience of sailing on it and geographers continued to imply that such a journey was improbable and dangerous. In his geography, sometimes called the *Book of Roger* because it was written for Roger of Sicily in 1154, al-Idrīsī repeated the common view that al-Andalus was the end of the known world; beyond it lay the Tenebrous Ocean, where no one dared to venture (Al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat*: 2; Picard 1995). Or almost no one: al-Idrīsī also recounted the story of the Adventurers of Lisbon, eight cousins equipped with

provisions for several months, who sailed with the first easterly wind to find the limits of the ocean (Al-Idrīsī *Nuzhat*: 184–186); he believed it to be a true story because a street in Lisbon, near the hot baths, was named after them. 'After eleven days' the Adventurers sailed into 'sea of huge waves, thick clouds, with numerous shoals and little light'. Fearing to lose their way in the dark, they turned south; the rest of the story recounts their exploration of some islands, where they found giant, strangely inedible sheep – perhaps the first reported sighting of polar bears (Robert Hoyland's observation).

Looking in vain for terminological precision, some modern historians have identified Vikings in the Iberia peninsula as early as the last decade of the eighth century. A thirteenth-century eastern historian, Ibn al-Athīr, who compiled a compendium of the history of the Islamic world up to his own day, concluded a brief account of a campaign led by Alfonso II of Asturias against the emir Hishām in 795 with the statement that 'Alfonso summoned his army . . . and was aided by the king of the Basques (*al-Bashkūnas*), who were his neighbours, and those who were adjacent to them, the *Majūs* and the people of that region' (Ibn al-Athīr *Kāmil*, vol.6: 146). Four other late-medieval Muslim historians (al-Nuwairi, Ibn Khaldūn, Ibn Idhārī and al-Maqqarī) preserved versions of the same passage. Yet of these, only Ibn Idhārī made *Majūs* one of the participants in the campaign (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 64–65). Similarly, the eleventh-century historian Ibn Ḥayyān reported that, when forces of the emir Muhammad raided Pamplona in 816, they killed several noblemen, including 'Sulṭān, the best horseman of the *Majūs*' (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas*, 'Textos inéditos': 297). Ibn Idārī's account of the same episode, in contrast, talks of a campaign to the 'land of the *Mushrikīn* (idolators)', but he does not list *Majūs* among the emir's enemies (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 75). In 825, 'Abd al-Raḥmān II sent a campaign against Alava that culminated in a fierce battle near 'the mountain of the *Majūs* (*Jabal al-Majūs*)' but there is no reason to suppose that Vikings had settled here (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: trans.: 284 and n.588). Nor were there Vikings in the 'land of the *Majūs*' which Ibn Idhārī located in Septimania, on the border between Francia and Iberia (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 64; for an alternative reading see Pritsak 1990). Medieval writers could also be confused. Ibn Ḥawqal, a geographer who based his work on written sources but also visited al-Andalus in 949 and should have been better informed, noted that 'from time to time, the peninsula has been

attacked by the fleets of *Majūs*', but he included among them 'Turks, Pechenegs and other races such as *Saqāliba* (possibly Slavs) and Bulgars' (Ibn Ḥawqal, vol.1: 113). Ibn Ḥawqal, like some modern scholars, missed the point that although nearly all Vikings are labelled *Majūs*, not all *Majūs* are Vikings.

Characterizing Vikings as *Majūs* had a number of implications. *Majūs*, from the Greek 'magician' or 'magus', was originally used of the Zoroastrians of Iran, whom the Qur'an classified as one of the Peoples of the Book protected under Muslim law. But, as Gayangos noted as long ago as 1840, *Majūs* 'was in time applied by the Arabs to all northern nations' (Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-tīb*, trans.: Gayangos vol.1: 323, n.48). In a twelfth-century Latin–Arabic glossary *Majūs* is given as the synonym for both *gentilis* and *paganus* (*Glossario latino–arabicum*: 213, 361). There are several references by the historians of al-Andalus to *Majūs* in this context. Ibn Idhārī noted that 'It is said that the first [people] to settle al-Andalus after the Flood were called *al-Andalush* . . . and it was named al-Andalus [after them] . . . And it is said that they were *Majūs* . . .' (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 1). The tenth-century geographer al-Mas'ūdī illustrated the scope of the term by employing *Majūs* both for the kings of the Franks before their conversion to Catholicism and for Vikings: indeed, in the same section of his work (Al-Mas'ūdī *Murūj* vol.2: 148). At one extreme, *Majūs* was simply a term of abuse (Alfonso 2008: 32). Conversely, in legal texts from al-Andalus dating from the tenth century and after, *Majūs* kept some of its original reference to Zoroastrianism, even in contexts where it is clearly inappropriate (Fernández 2003: 414). Ibn al-Attār (d.1009) collected five examples of scribal formulae to be used to record conversion to Islam by Christians, Jews – and also *Majūs*: 'the convert *Fulān b. Fulān* (So-and so) . . . being in his full intelligence and juridical capacity . . . abandons the *Majūs* religion, which was his own . . .' (cited by Chalmeta 1986: 166). A fifteenth-century Maghrebi collection preserves a ruling against lighting a fire at night, 'which [says the judge] is the custom of the *Majūs*' (Lagardère 1995: 49). Here *Majūs* is included in the Qur'anic context for completeness, rather than as an indication that there were pagans, fire-worshippers or Vikings living in al-Andalus or the Maghreb at this period.

Recognition of the semantic range of *Majūs* disposes, alas, of the Viking cheese-makers (Aguadé 1986). In his *History de l'Espagne musulman*, Lévi-Provençal speculated that a group of Vikings who had been defeated at Seville

in 844 did not sail away, but settled in al-Andalus to make cheese (Lévi-Provençal 1950–1953, vol.1: 224). Lévi-Provençal's encylopaedic knowledge of the Arabic sources for al-Andalus brought to his mind a statement attributed to a contemporary of the first Viking raiders, Ibn Ḥabīb (d.853), and he made creative use of it. The statement is preserved in at least two later sources: a treatise on the regulation of markets (Lévi-Provençal 1955: 101) and a tenth-century work on *jihād* (Ibn Abī Zamanīn *Qidwāt al-Gāzī*, trans.: 129). Such texts were concerned with defining the boundary between Muslim and non-Muslim, especially in lands such as al-Andalus where they might come into daily contact (Safran 2013). Legal scholars ruled on the degree to which Muslims were allowed to mix with people of other faiths, which included wearing clothes that non-Muslims had made, and eating their food (Fernández and Fierro 2000; Christys 2007). Some of the rulings specified that non-Muslim meant Christian or Jew; others were less precise. In this instance Ibn Ḥabīb ruled that 'it is not harmful to eat the cheese of the *Rūm* [Byzantines, or more likely Christians in general] and so forth of the enemy among the Peoples of the Book. [But] one must not eat the cheese of the *Majūs*'. It is hard to interpret this statement in isolation, which is the way such rulings were preserved in later compilations. It does not seem to have anything to do with Vikings. A brief account of al-Andalus from the conquest to the 880s, attributed to a pupil of Ibn Ḥabīb, does not mention Vikings (Ibn Ḥabīb *Kitab al–Ta'rikh*). Ibn Ḥabīb's remark about *Majūs* cheese is probably a disparagement of pagans in general and may have been written without any allusion to a new category of *Majūs* who had recently appeared off the coasts of Iberia.

There were other ways of labelling Vikings, but they were employed much less frequently. Ibn Idhārī occasionally used the terms *Kafirūn* (unbelievers) and *Mushrikūn* (idol worshippers). Arabic authors also used a term that may be related to the *Nordomanni*, *Normani* or *Lordomanni* of the Latin chronicles. In a compilation from the eleventh century Ibn Ḥayyān referred to the raiders as '*al-Urmāniyīna*, who are known in al-Andalus as *Majūs*' (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: fol.185). Historians in al-Andalus could have adopted this terminology from Latin usage, perhaps from Christian visitors from Asturias. In an account of a tenth-century embassy to Cordoba from Astorga warning of the advent of Vikings, Ibn Ḥayyān seems to be linking the designation *Majūs* with *Nordomanni* by calling the raiders *al-Majūs*

al-ārdumāniyīn (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [971–975]: 27; Chapter 6). The similarity between the two terms may be fortuitous. The philologist Corriente thought that *ārdumāniyīn* related to the Greek *ardamūn* – mizzen mast – hence sailors (Corriente 1997: 10). Later writers, both Christians and Muslims, added to the confusion from what they knew about the Scandinavians who had settled in Normandy at the end of the tenth century. Ibn Idhārī, writing on the capture of Barbastro by Crusaders from France in 1064, referred to this group as 'an army of *Ārdumāniyīn*' (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.3: 225), using the term that Ibn Ḥayyān had given to Vikings in his account of the embassy to Cordoba. Although Ibn Idhārī may have imagined the attackers sailing to Barbastro, it is more likely that he was taking *Ārdumāniyīn* and *Majūs* from his repertoire of labels for non-Muslims; the precise meaning of *Majūs* and its cognates did not interest him.

Most of these different ways of writing about Vikings come together in the work of al-Mas'ūdī. Born in Baghdad in the 890s, he travelled widely in the Muslim world, although he did not visit al-Andalus. Al-Mas'ūdī was more interested in non-Muslim peoples than many of his contemporaries and made several statements about Vikings. In the course of a garbled list of Carolingian rulers, he noted that during the reign of *Qarluh ibn Ludrīq* (Charles the Bald):

> a chief of the Franks called Buwsa (Boso, duke of Provence) rebelled against him; [Boso?] ruled Ifranja (here Provence) and his reign lasted 8 years. He was the one who made peace with *Majūs* in his country for 6 years for 600 ratls of gold and 600 ratls of silver; the ruler of Ifranja saw to it that it got to them.
>
> (Al-Mas'ūdī *Murūj*, vol.2: 148)

Although we may assume that these *Majūs* were Vikings, al-Mas'ūdī's statements about ethnicity are frequently ambiguous. He supplemented the Ptolemaic world-view with information from his own observations and enquiries and from books he discovered on his travels. Yet he accepted the Greek idea that the world ended near the straits of Gibraltar and noted that there was a colossus at Cadiz with its arm raised towards the West, warning travellers not to go any further. Beyond here, in the very vaguest of terms, were the 'North' and the 'West' (Al-Mas'ūdī *Tanbih*: 68–69; Shboul 1979: 177). In a short ethnological excursus, al-Mas'ūdī included among the peoples inhabiting the 'North' not only the 'Turks', '*Rūs*', 'Slavs' and 'Franks' but also the Christians

of northern Spain and the Lombards (*al-Nukubarda*), of whom he says that 'their country extends to the West and their location is in the North' (Al-Mas'ūdī *Murūj*, vol.2: 151). He was little clearer in describing the adverse effect of the climate of the North on its peoples:

> In the extreme North . . . where the influence of the sun is rather alleviated and the regions abound in cold, moisture and snow, the people are characterized by good physique, rude behaviour, slow speech, harsh tongues, white complexion, thick flesh, blue eyes, thin skin, curly and red hair. All these characteristics are found due to the predominance of moisture in their lands, and their cold nature does not encourage firmness of religious belief. Those living further North are characterised by dullness of mind, harsh behaviour and barbarism.
>
> (Al-Mas'ūdī *Kitāb al-Tanbih*: 23–24, trans.: 38)

An anonymous *Book of Wonders* (*Kitāb al-ajā'ib*) previously attributed to al-Mas'ūdī but dating perhaps from the twelfth century, amplified this description:

> Concerning . . . *Majūs* who worship the sun. They live by a pleasant sea that runs from the region of the North to the South and also a sea that runs from the West to the East until it meets another sea that runs from the direction of the Bulgars. They have many rivers which are all in the North and they do not have a salt-water sea because their land is far from the sun, and their water is sweet. No one lives in the North because of the cold and frequent earthquakes. Many of their tribes are *Majūs* whose bodies are burned by fire which they worship. There are many towns and fortresses and they have churches with bells hanging in them . . . Among them is a people between the *Saqāliba* (Slavs) and the *Ifranja* (Europeans) of the faith of the Sabians who profess worship of the stars.
>
> (Seippel vol.1: 127–128)

Al-Mas'ūdī probably knew that these *Majūs* were not Zoroastrians, whose beliefs he describes in some detail, having travelled in Iran, talked with Zoroastrian priests, read their religious texts and visited their fire temples. But false etymology and the desire to include all the information at his disposal led him to attribute some of their practices to the men of the North just because they too are labelled *Majūs*. It was these people who attacked al-Andalus:

> Before the year 300/912–913 ships returned to al-Andalus by sea bearing a thousand of the *Aghart/Faghart* people to her shores (the derivation of this

> term is unexplained). The people of al-Andalus believed that they were a people of the *Majūs* who successfully raided them from this sea every two hundred years. [They also believed] that they came to their country from a bay/gulf lying on the opposite coast of the *Uqyans* sea (possibly the Atlantic) and not from the gulf where there is a copper lighthouse. And I think – but God alone knows – that this gulf is connected to the *Mayutus* sea and *Buntus* and that this people are the *Rūs* whom we mentioned earlier in this book for they are the only people who sail across those seas, which are connected with the Atlantic Ocean.
>
> (Al-Mas'ūdī *Murūj*, vol.1: 193)

Al-Mas'ūdī was not the first to link the attacks of the *Majūs* on al-Andalus with *Rūs* who traded along the Russian river system. Latin chroniclers were aware of the probable connection between the *Rūs* and Scandinavia from the first reference to *Rūs* in the west; an embassy to Louis the Pious from Byzantium in 839 included 'men of the *Rūs*' and 'when the Emperor investigated more closely the reason for their coming here, he discovered that they belonged to the people of the Swedes' (*Annals of St-Bertin* a.839, trans.: Nelson: 44) Liudprand of Cremona, who visited Constantinople in 949 and 960, mentioned 'a certain northern people whom the Greeks call *Rūs*, "rufous" from the colour of their skin while we from the position of their country call them *Nordomanni*' (Liudprand *Antapodosis*, vol.5: 15, trans.: 185). Al-Mas'ūdī, however, may have been the first to suggest that these *Majūs* came from beyond the Encircling Ocean. Al-Mas'ūdī knew the *Rūs* from his travels in the eastern Islamic lands and in the Caucasus (Al-Mas'ūdī *Murūj*, vol.1: 143, 214, 216, 218). They were pagans who travelled by boat, and traded with Byzantium; al-Mas'ūdī thought that they owed no allegiance to any law or king (Al-Mas'ūdī *Murūj*, vol.1: 214). *Rūs* consisted of different peoples (*ajnās,* the plural of *jins*, the Arabic *gens*). Al-Mas'ūdī labelled one group of *Rūs* as *al-lawdh'āna*, perhaps an echo of the terms *Lordomanni/al-ārdumāniyīn* used for Vikings in Iberia, and said that this group traded with al-Andalus, Byzantium and the land of the Khazars (Al-Mas'ūdī *Murūj*, vol.1: 216). Although al-Mas'ūdī's explanations only add to our confusion, he seems to have recognized more clearly than his contemporaries, and perhaps more clearly than some modern scholars, that neither *Rūs* nor *Majūs* emerge with a single identity, and that observations that he had made about their activities in Byzantium could only with caution be transferred to *Majūs* who raided Iberia.

The 'hegemony of ethnic nominalism' (Montgomery 2010) provides the background to an account of an embassy led by a poet, al-Ghazāl, to a *Majūs* court (Ibn Dihya *Mutrib*: 138–146, trans.: Stefánsson: 37–38). In spite of repeated attempts to undermine the credibility of this episode, it has become part of the story of Vikings in the South. In 844 or 845:

> A *Majūs* ambassador came to make peace with Abdurrahaman after the defeat of the Seville expedition in the autumn of 844 who sent al-Ghazāl on an embassy to the *Majūs* king, for al-Ghazāl had great presence of mind, and no door remained closed to him. Al-Ghazāl took costly presents with him on board, and sailed in his own ship along with the *Majūs* ship. He arrived at one of their islands, where he rested and repaired his ship. The *Majūs* ambassador then sailed first to announce his arrival. They sailed to where the king resided. It was a great island in the ocean, and in it were running waters and gardens. It was three days' journey from the continent. Innumerable *Majūs* were there, and near were many other isles, small and great inhabited by *Majūs* and the continent up there also belongs to them. It is a large country and it takes several days to pass through it.

The story survives in an anthology of poetry composed in Egypt in the thirteenth century by an Andalusi, Ibn Dihya. The compiler named his source for the embassy as a ninth-century history of al-Andalus up to the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (822–852) by Tammām ibn Alqama; some of the latter's poetry survives, but the history has been lost. In fact, the account of the embassy is probably based on another mission that al-Ghazāl was supposed to have led, to Constantinople (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [797–848] trans.: 228; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-tīb*, vol.1: 223, 631; Lévi-Provençal 1937). It is not clear whether Ibn Dihya's account was his own work, although he is considered to be exceptionally untrustworthy – and this was so even in his own day (Rubiera 2004: 39). The story must have been composed, or interpolated, in the eleventh century or later after the Christianization of Scandinavia, because it says: '*Majūs* were heathens. but now they follow the Christian faith'; the religion that they have abandoned in favour of Christianity is fire-worship. Ibn Dihya's account also has al-Ghazāl returning via Santiago de Compostela, a city that was insignificant in 845 (López 1988: 95–96), and this heightens the sense of anachronism. By the time of writing, however, Ibn Dihya may have known of the pilgrimage to Santiago from Arabic sources. An eleventh-century

geographer, al-Bakrī, noted among the cities of Jilliqīya (the Christian north) '*madīna Shant Yaqū*, the city of the gold church. In it is a day when [people] arrive from *Ifranja* and *Rūm* and all the ends of their world' (Al-Bakrī *Geography*: 61; see Chapter 4). The poet Ibn Darrāj, whose work Ibn Dihya also anthologized in the *Mutrib*, composed a poem celebrating al-Manṣūr's raid on Santiago in 997 (cited by Perez de Urbel 1971). The poem may have served as grist to the mill of Ibn Dihya's imagination.

It would be nice to be able to read the story of the embassy in the spirit of McCormick's remark that 'imaginary travellers shed real light on early medieval travel and communications' (McCormick 2001: 237). Yet the point of the embassy was to travel but not to arrive. The story may be located within a series of narratives of the eleventh to fourteenth centuries that show Andalusis leaving home to negotiate 'the hybrid cultural spaces that define medieval Iberia' [as] 'go-betweens whose exploits explore constructions of Andalusi identity' (Hamilton 2007: 14). The section of Ibn Dihya's encyclopaedia devoted to al-Ghazāl concentrates on two aspects of the poet: his works, which Ibn Dihya cited extensively, and his wit. The embassy to the *Majūs* court illustrates both these aspects. When the poet presented himself at court, the *Majūs* king tried to demean him by making him enter via a very low doorway; this was a *topos* and the Byzantine emperor had supposedly presented al-Ghazāl with the same dilemma. In both cases, al-Ghazāl insulted the ruler by going in feet first. Three poems punctuate the account of the embassy to the *Majūs*. Ibn Dihya emphasized the poet's skill and interrupted his narrative to lament the neglect of Andalusi and Maghrebi poets; all the published translations leave out this section of the text, thus skewing the meaning of the whole (Stefánsson: 32–33; Allen 1960: 19–25; Lewis *c.* 1982: 93–95). More than half of the passage describes al-Ghazāl's flattery of the queen of the *Majūs* to whom he improvizes a poem that begins: 'You have to resist, Oh my heart, a love that troubles thee, and against which you defend yourself as a lion. You are in love with a *Majūsiya*, who never lets the sun of beauty set, and who lives at the rarely visited extremity of the world'. Although he was writing within the Arabic tradition of courtly love (Rubiera 2004: 53–68; Sells 2000), Ibn Dihya was also sending up al-Ghazāl, who was far too old to be courting a queen; in another poem, al-Ghazāl himself agreed that 'youthful passion is not good for an old man' (Ibn Dihya *Mutrib*: 134–135). Ibn Dihya's portrayal of al-Ghazāl

has the simulacrum of an individualized biography; in contrast, the queen of the *Majūs* is the standard representation of 'barbarian' as the inversion of normality. After recounting al-Ghazāl's flirtation with the queen, with the king complaisantly looking on, Ibn Dihya lays out a discussion of marriage and divorce. He shows *Majūs* women as the object of a textual strategy housing both barbarian and female otherness, in which sexual freedom for women and the lack of jealousy of their men were *topoi* (Pohl 2004). Another example is Bertha, the queen of the Franks who proposed marriage to a caliph (Christys 2010). Al-Ghazāl's destination was simply 'somewhere else, not here' and his story contributes nothing to the discussion of Viking ethnography which was, albeit in a garbled fashion, taking place in the work of geographers such as al-Mas'ūdī.

Scholars writing in Arabic continued to place Vikings just beyond the limits of the familiar world:

> In the ocean are the seven eternal islands, lying to the West of the city of Salé. They are easily visible on a clear, cloudless day. There one can find seven idols in the shape of men, indicating that beyond here there are no routes nor roads. To the North are the Fortunate Islands, with a great number of cities and peoples. From here sail *Majūs*, who are of the Christian religion . . .
>
> (Ibn Sa'īd the Maghrebi (d.1286) cited in al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-tīb*, vol.1: 156–157)

Historians and geographers such as Ibn Sa'īd put Vikings into a category – *Majūs* – with which they were already familiar. In doing so, they tried to put in everything they knew about this category. Scholars writing in Latin were more succinct, but they were working within the same Late Antique legacy from the Greeks. In the next chapter we will see how this influenced the way that both Christians and Muslims remembered the first Viking expeditions to the South.

3

So the Story Goes

The campaign of 844 is probably the most significant episode of the whole period of Viking activity in the South. Yet in the absence of archaeological evidence and charters, instances of monastic destruction by sea-raiders are difficult to pinpoint to the ninth century. Local tradition held Vikings responsible for the destruction in 844 of San Cibrán (Cipriano) de Cálogo, founded by Fructuosus of Braga in the sixth century, near the port of Villanueva de Arosa, at the mouth of the river Currás, Pontevedra (Huerta y Vega 1733–1736, vol.2, 836–838). Today, only a Romanesque bell tower stands on the site of the monastery. This folk memory suggests that the campaign was significant, at least in Galicia. Its impact on historiography was certainly substantial.

The expedition was recorded within a generation and we can have confidence in the outline of events even though many of the details were added later. Laconic early reports fed into a sort of rolling news broadcast, with updates continuing to arrive for centuries afterwards. It would be a mistake to assume that details were added simply to make it a better story. Later writers sometimes fleshed out their accounts from their knowledge of Vikings' subsequent attacks. There is no way of knowing how accurate these later additions might have been. So, whilst it would be a pity to limit the story only to the earliest accounts, one should not spend too much time on variant dates and estimates for the size of Viking fleets, except where they give an indication of who was copying from whom. On the other hand, we should not simply fillet the later accounts for plausible details. As is commonly recognized, historians of all periods rewrite the past in tune with contemporary preoccupations. Medieval historians also wrote within a rhetorical tradition that taught them above all to be persuasive, even if this meant including elaborations that the author knew to be untrue (Kempsall 2011). We can read about Vikings in the work of historians as late as the thirteenth-century bishop of Toledo, Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, and the

Maghrebi historian, Ibn Idhārī, in a number of different ways. We may begin by having some idea where their details came from, and whether they can be verified by going back to the earlier account. It may be possible to develop a theory about why and how they elaborated, but rarely abbreviated, what they had read. At other times we should just enjoy reading what they wrote, in the spirit of a historical novel that aims for, but does not always achieve, verisimilitude. This chapter takes a cumulative approach to accounts of the raid of 844, saying a little about each historian mentioned, his sources and biases, what and why he (or, less likely, she) added to the story. It will be a corrective to modern narratives of Vikings in Iberia that have glossed over the problems of the source material and it will also form the background to discussions of later periods of Viking activity. Comparison between different elaborations of the core material should make clear the enduring appeal of Vikings as a narrative focus.

The earliest reference to the Viking attack of 844 is in the entry in the *Annals of St-Bertin* for that year. Prudentius recorded several Viking raids on Francia, and it was in the context of an attack on Toulouse that he described their advent in the Iberian peninsula:

> Vikings (*Nordomanni*) sailed up the Garonne as far as Toulouse, wreaking destruction everywhere, without meeting any opposition. Then some of them withdrew from there and attacked Galicia, but they perished, partly because they met resistance from missile throwers, partly because they were caught in a storm at sea. Some of them, though, got to the south-western part of Spain, where they fought long and bitterly with the Saracens, but were finally beaten and withdrew to their ships.
>
> (*AB* a.844, trans.: 60)

We do not know where Prudentius got his information. Of Spanish parentage, but almost certainly educated at the Carolingian court from an early age, Prudentius took over writing the *Annals of St-Bertin* in *c.* 835, as a contemporaneous record, concentrating on events as they affected the Carolingian empire and written mainly at court. St-Bertin, although not affected directly by Vikings, was not far from the sea. Late in 843, however, Prudentius was appointed to the see of Troyes, a considerable distance from Paris and about as far from the sea as it was possible to be in the western part of the empire. News seems to have reached him only sporadically, to judge

from the thinning of the entries on all matters in the *Annals*. Far from being an official record, it was now being written by a man who was critical of Charles the Bald and in dispute with Charles' arch-chaplain Hincmar of Rheims, who took over the *Annals* at Prudentius' death in 861. Yet Prudentius' succinct account of the first recorded Viking attack on Iberia seems to be accurate; it was a summary with which a wide range of apparently independent reporters concur. A generation later, a geographer, al-Ya'qūbī, mentioned the same raids. Al-Ya'qūbī had no direct connection with al-Andalus. He was born and educated in Armenia and Khorasan, travelled to India and spent his later years in the Maghrib and Egypt, where he wrote his *Book of Countries* in 891. In a very short entry on Seville, al-Ya'qūbī noted that 'Vikings (*Majūs*), who are also called the *Rūs*, fell upon the city in 229 AH (30 September 843–17 September 844) with plunder, destruction and killing' (Al-Ya'qūbī *Kitāb al-buldān*: 354). Prudentius' and al-Ya'qūbī's accounts are complementary. Just as Prudentius had made it clear that the raiders on Iberia were the same Vikings with whom the West was familiar, so al-Ya'qūbī identified Seville's attackers with the *Rūs* who traded in Eastern Europe. Neither Prudentius nor al-Ya'qūbī found it remarkable that these men had widened their sphere of action to include Iberia.

At about the time al-Ya'qūbī was writing, two chronicles compiled in the Asturian kingdom recorded the Viking attack on Galicia. The earlier of the two is the *Chronicle of Albelda*, named after the copy made at the monastery of Albelda, in the Rioja, in 976. In a section dealing with the reign of Ramiro I (842–850) the *Chronicle of Albelda* says merely that 'at that time Vikings (*Lordomanni*) came to the Asturias for the first time' (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 175). The author of the chronicle was writing with the hindsight of having suffered at least one subsequent attack, since he mentioned the Vikings' return to Galicia in 859 (Chapter 4). He was almost as laconic about the latter episode, but added the observation that Count Peter drove off the marauders. This introduces an important theme in the historiography of the Viking attacks, which is characteristic of the Frankish sources as well, but which here we may call the Don Teudo Rico effect: both Christian and Muslim authors said little about the raiders themselves, their focus being on the heroes who repelled them. The *Chronicle of Albelda*'s theme was to show how, after Pelayo's victory over the Muslims at Covadonga, God restored his covenant to the Christians of Hispania, broken in 711 because of their disunity. An appendix to the

chronicle included the prophecy that Gog (one of the names that Isidore of Seville used for the Goths) would drive the Muslims out of the peninsula. This *Prophetic Chronicle*, as it is sometimes known, was written in 883 with the expectation that Muslim rule would soon come to an end. The continuator also mentioned that 'Vikings (*Lothomanni*) arrived in Spain in [Spanish] Era 880, on the second Kalends of August' (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 188). This date, written *DCCCLXXX II calends augustas*, is equivalent to 31 July 842. Without the gap in the Roman numerals, *DCCCLXXXII calends augustas* is 1 August 844. The first version vindicates the date 842 chosen for the Luarca plaque, but the gap in the date was introduced to fit a line break, so that the reading 842 reflects stylistic choice rather than being a scribal error (John Wreglesworth's observation). Unless there were two different raids, the second date is more likely to be accurate since it fits with what Prudentius had heard about Vikings in Spain, and with most of the later sources, as we shall see.

The second Asturian chronicle, written for Alfonso III (866–910), which survives in two early tenth-century versions, also dated the arrival of Vikings to the reign of Ramiro I. The correlation between the passages on Vikings in the *Chronicle of Albelda* and the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* is uncertain. Even if the information may have come from a common source, it was interpolated in a different place in the two chronicles. The *Chronicle of Alfonso III* expanded the narrative to include the Vikings' arrival in al-Andalus:

> In the era 881 (843) . . . Ramiro, son of prince Vermudo, was elected king. . . . At the same time Vikings (*Nordomanorum gens*), a pagan and extremely cruel people previously unknown to us, arrived in our region with their naval forces. Ramiro, who had by then been made king, gathered a great army and fought against them at a place called *Farum Brecantium*. There he destroyed many bands of Vikings and burned their ships with fire. The others, those who were left, took to the sea and went to the province of *Baetica* (the writer means Muslim Spain/al-Andalus). They entered the city of Seville and annihilated many bands of Chaldeans (Muslims) there, partly by the sword and partly by fire. After the year had passed and the city of Seville had been invaded, they returned to their own country.
>
> (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 142, trans.: 174–175)

This passage is essentially the same as Prudentius' account, with a few extra circumstantial details. *Farum Brecantium* may be the lighthouse at A Coruña,

also known as the Tower of Hercules because it was thought to have been built by that great hero of Antiquity (Guerra 1964: 641–644). *Brigantium* was one of the three 'angles' of *Hispania* in Strabo and Orosius' descriptions of the peninsula, which begins '*Hispania* is triangular . . .'. One of the versions of the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* located the Vikings' first landfall 'on the shore by the city of Gegio' (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 143); this could be Gijon, which is not far from Luarca; from here they went on to *Farum Brecantium*. The chronicler's retelling of the episode made Ramiro, Alfonso's ancestor, rather than Prudentius' anonymous 'missile throwers', the hero of the Asturians' repulse of the marauders. It is impossible to know whether Ramiro's army, rather than local forces hurriedly assembled, was responsible for the Vikings' defeat. Ramiro's hold on the throne was insecure, even after victories over the Muslims, to which the Asturian chronicles make only vague allusions (Collins 2012: 71; Isla 2011). The story that he had repulsed a Viking raid added to Ramiro's posthumous legitimacy, which in turn reflected on Alfonso, who could not himself claim any victory against Vikings. It is difficult to know how much weight to give to the chronicler's description of Vikings as being 'previously unknown to us'. It may be a *topos*; in a letter to Ethelred of Northumbria, Alcuin said of the attack on Lindisfarne that 'never before has such a terror appeared in Britain as we have suffered from a pagan race' (Alcuin, trans.: no.12). Aimoin, a monk of St-Germain, near Paris, made a similar statement about a Viking attack on his city in 845: 'the vast army of Vikings breached the frontier of the Christians. This was something that we never heard or read of before' (Aimoin *Miracula*: col.1029, trans.: Nelson, 1997: 19). Aimoin was clearly exaggerating the surprise element for effect, to please his patron, Charles the Bald, who had driven the attackers away. After nearly a century of Viking activity in Francia, the Christians of Northern Iberia probably knew what to expect from the Scandinavians, as a result of their contacts with Carolingian rulers and clerics (Collins 2012: 68–69). The Asturian chronicler's comment may simply confirm that this was the first Viking attack on the peninsula, but it is also possible that he was trying to heighten the impact of Ramiro's victory by dramatizing the irruption of these pagans onto the Iberian stage. Ramiro's triumph resonated through later Latin and Romance chronicles, as we shall see.

We have to wait until the middle of the tenth century for the first indigenous Arabic account of the attack of 844. The writer, Ibn al-Qūṭīya (d.977), dated the

attack to 230 AH (17 September 844–1 October 845), as did nearly all the other Arabic historians who refer to it, although some of them noted the arrival of Vikings off the coast in 229AH, i.e. before 17 September 844. This date fits well with the raids on the northern coast in early August of the same year that the *Prophetic Chronicle* recorded. Ibn al-Qūṭīya's version of events is detailed and for the most part plausible, but there are several problems with it. His *History of the Conquest* survives only in a version that may have been compiled by one of his pupils, in a late-medieval manuscript (Christys 2002: 160–168). It is typical of Arabic historiography that Ibn al-Qūṭīya did not mention the raids on the North; historians writing in Arabic rarely recorded the deeds of Christians, except in accounts of military encounters on the frontier. His narrative of the attack on Seville consolidated memories of the Andalusi response to the marauders. Ibn al-Qūṭīya focused on internal politics, listing the men who answered the emir's summons to repel the invaders, and explaining the basis for their allegiance to the Umayyads.

> ʻAbd al-Raḥmān [II] . . . built the walls of [Seville], because of the seizure of Seville by Vikings (*Majūs*) when they invaded, during his reign, in the year 844 . . . The inhabitants panicked and fled the city . . . None of the inhabitants of western al-Andalus attempted to resist the invaders, so volunteers were recruited from among the people of Córdoba and its neighbouring provinces. Accompanied by some ministers they set off, together with volunteers recruited from the Marches who had assembled after the invaders had occupied the far western seaboard and the area around Lisbon, in their first invasion.
>
> (Ibn al-Qūṭīya *Ta'rīkh*, 78, trans.: James, 100)

Using Seville as a base, Vikings raided as far inland as Constantina, north-west of Cordoba. The Andalusis were unable to make any headway against them until Mūsā ibn Mūsā of the Banū Qasī was persuaded to add his troops to the assembled forces. The Banū Qasī were Christians who had converted to Islam within a very few years of the Muslim conquest of the peninsula. They ruled a semi-autonomous kingdom in the north-east of the peninsula, and their allegiance to Cordoba was unreliable. According to Ibn al-Qūṭīya's version of events, ʻAbd al-Raḥmān reminded Mūsā that he owed his position to the Umayyads, who had accepted his family as clients (*muwallad*s) after his forefather Cassius' conversion. Thus reinforced, the Andalusi forces ambushed

one group of Vikings at Quintas de Moafer (*Kintush Mu'āfir*), a village south of Seville. Two other Viking bands fled to their ships and, pausing only to exchange their captives for cloth and provisions, sailed away.

Ibn al-Qūṭīya did not have a good reputation as a historian. Indeed, in their attitude to each other, medieval Arabic historians resemble the scholars of any age. One of Ibn al-Qūṭīya's pupils noted that, although his master was justly famous for his treatises on grammar, he had broken the rules of historiography: 'what he recounted conveys meaning but not literal truth . . .' and '. . . often lacked verification' (Ibn al-Faraḍī *Ta'rīkh:* no.1316). Ibn al-Faraḍī may have meant by this that Ibn al-Qūṭīya rarely followed the Islamic practice of naming one's sources to produce a chain of authorities going back, at least in theory, to an eyewitness. Thus historical statements were validated by analogy with the practice of *ḥadīth*, in which chains of witnesses claimed to be handing down the sayings of the prophet Muḥammad. Yet the theoretical norms were rarely followed, and historians were often indicted for careless transmission. Ibn al-Qūṭīya was particularly lax in this respect. There is no indication where he found his narrative of the Viking raid of 844. Further, for modern readers, the plausibility of the account is undermined in several ways. The number of Vikings – 16,000 in just one of the three bands of raiders – is ludicrously high. Ibn al-Qūṭīya also made the raid on Seville part of an expedition lasting fourteen years, in which Vikings went on to attack the Maghreb, Alexandria and Byzantium. It seems that he conflated events of 844 with the second expedition of 859–861. Even more damaging to the credibility of this passage is Ibn al-Qūṭīya's explanation of the significance of the Viking attack:

> After the building of the Great Mosque of Seville was complete, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān II had a dream in which he entered the building and found the Prophet Muḥammad – peace and praises be upon him – lying in the prayer-niche, dead, and wrapped in a shroud. The dream caused him to awake in distress, so he asked those who interpreted dreams for an explanation. They told him, 'This is where his Faith will die'. Immediately after that the capture of the city by Vikings occurred . . . More than one of the elders of Seville related how Vikings set their arrows on fire and aimed them at the roof of the Great Mosque. Whatever ignited fell to the ground, and the marks of those arrows can be seen in the roof until this day. When they failed to burn the mosque, they piled wood and straw mats in one of the aisles and tried to get the fire to reach the ceiling. Then a youth came from the direction of the

> prayer-niche and forced them out of the mosque, and held them off for three days until the attack on them [by the Andalusis] took place. According to Vikings, he was a young man of great physical beauty.
>
> (Ibn al-Qūṭīya *Ta'rīkh*: 80, trans.: 101)

Many of the episodes recounted in Ibn al-Qūṭīya's *History* have a moral lesson, and concern men – and one woman, Sara the Goth, from whom he may have taken his name – who, like his own family, were indigenous Christians whose ancestors converted to Islam after the conquest of 711 (Christys 2002: 158–183). Ibn al-Qūṭīya showed how some of these families held onto their lands and entered the service of the Umayyads. His message in his narrative of the Viking raid on al-Andalus is clear. With the intervention of his forces in the struggle against Vikings, the convert Mūsā ibn Mūsā saved the Umayyad realm and with it Islam in Iberia from collapse. It was a decisive response to the dangers of political disunity, dramatized in the emir's dream. The miraculous intervention of the young man could be a local legend current at the time that Ibn al-Qūṭīya was writing. It suggests a familiarity with Christian hagiography, since miraculous interventions by saints or other holy figures are rare in Arabic histories. Ibn al-Qūṭīya's providential reading of the Viking scourge goes further than the contemporary Latin chronicles, although it is echoed in later Latin sources.

Whether it was because of his bias towards converts, or his poor reputation as a historian, Ibn al-Qūṭīya's work was not very influential. Later historians rarely cited him, relying instead on the works of Aḥmad al-Rāzī and his son Īsā, historians active in the court of the Umayyad caliphs ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III (928–961) and al-Ḥakam II (961–976). It is difficult to know exactly what the al-Rāzīs wrote, since it does not survive in its original form. Part of a description of al-Andalus by Aḥmad al-Rāzī was translated into Portuguese, and then into Castilian, as the *Crónica del Moro Rasis*. It preserves few historical details, and only in a garbled form. There is a brief reference to an attack by a seaborne band of 'heretics' on the south-western coast of al-Andalus but it is not dated: 'On this coast [of Sidona, the region around Jerez], where they gather good amber, is a town called Saluqa (Sanlúcar de Barrameda); it was here that a group of those people whom the Christians call 'heretics' (*unas gentes a que los cristianos llaman erejes*) disembarked, in Spain, and caused great harm, but they all perished' (*Crónica del Moro Rasis*: 103). Many historians writing in

Arabic claimed to be citing the al-Rāzīs, particularly Aḥmad. The relationship between the various citations is not straightforward, and at times they are contradictory. Aḥmad al-Rāzī's work, however, was the starting point for a collective memory of the Umayyad period in al-Andalus that was very different from Ibn al-Qūṭīya's, both in its lack of interest in indigenous society, and in its detailed narrative of events.

The first historian to cite the Rāzīs extensively was Ibn Ḥayyān (d.1076), active in the period of the taifa kingdoms that succeeded the Umayyad caliphate. Ibn Ḥayyān was remembered for his own writings on history, which have all been lost, and for the *Muqtabas*, a collection of citations of earlier historians. The whole work does not survive, although most of the second and third of ten parts, which cover the period of the Viking expeditions of 844 and 859–861, were copied into a late-medieval manuscript preserved in Fez (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [847–852]: 118–124). The *Muqtabas* is the single most important source for the history of al-Andalus in the Umayyad period, but it is problematic. Modern scholars have read it as an anthology, which Ibn Ḥayyān copied verbatim, at least in the section dealing with the ninth century. (The word *Muqtaba* implies 'to light a candle from someone else's fire'.) Ibn Ḥayyān assembled contradictory accounts with little attempt to arbitrate between them, a strategy that is typical of Arabic historiography. It does not mean, however, that he copied his sources *in toto* or without interpolation. Indeed, a thirteenth-century historian, al-Marrākushī, complained about Ibn Ḥayyān's cavalier treatment of his sources (Molina 2006). Until scholars have compared the *Muqtabas* with citations from Aḥmad and Īsā al-Rāzī by other historians, it is impossible to clarify the relationship between Ibn Ḥayyān's collection of texts and the sources that he copied. Understanding the caveats surrounding a quotation from 'Ibn Ḥayyān' is crucial for interpreting modern historiography of al-Andalus. The way that Ibn Ḥayyān handled the first Viking attack on al-Andalus illustrates the problems of the *Muqtabas*. Ibn Ḥayyān's candle illuminates many aspects of the episode, but the flame flickers and it is not easy to focus our attention.

Ibn Ḥayyān began by copying a long entry on the advent of Vikings, citing Aḥmad al-Rāzī. It begins: 'At the end of the year 229/843–844, ships of Vikings (*al-Urmānniyīna*), who are known in al-Andalus as the *Majūs*, appeared off the west coast of al-Andalus'(Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: fol.185v, trans.:

312). The narrative that follows is full of circumstantial details, which add to, but also contradict, Ibn al-Qūṭīya's version. Al-Rāzī noted that there were fifty-four large and fifty-four smaller ships. This seems to be an exaggeration. Ermentarius said that the attack on Nantes in 843, possibly by the same group, involved sixty-seven ships. Fleets of more than one hundred ships are a feature of the invasions of the Late Viking Age, such as Harald and Canute's expeditions against England, and would have been unlikely in the ninth century. Al-Rāzī named the governor of Lisbon who reported the Vikings' arrival to the emir in Cordoba and the Andalusi commanders whom 'Abd al-Raḥmān mobilized against the new threat. In the last days of 229 (the beginning of September 844) Vikings besieged the walls of Lisbon for thirteen days, before making for Cadiz and *Sidūna*, the district around Jerez. Hereabouts they fought a battle with the Andalusis at which Lubb, the brother of Mūsā ibn Mūsā was present. On 2 October 'ship after ship of the *Majūs* – may God curse them! – appeared before Seville and committed outrage in the city for seven days; the men were killed and the women and children captured' (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: fol.185v, trans.: 313). The most significant difference between Ibn Ḥayyān's various accounts of the Andalusi response to the Viking onslaught is the change in *dramatis personae*. Here, the main protagonist of the defence is the eunuch Naṣr, the son of a Christian convert to Islam, who became a favourite of 'Abd al-Raḥmān II and directed the expansion of the Great Mosque of Cordoba (Vallvé 1985). Led by Naṣr, Andalusi forces defeated the raiders at a crucial battle at *Ṭalyāṭa* on 1 November. 'Abd al-Raḥmān sent the news to all parts of the realm, and despatched the heads of the Viking leaders to his clients, the Berber emirs of North Africa.

Īsā al-Rāzī, in a comment on his father's report, which Ibn Ḥayyān also included (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: fols.186r, 186v, trans.: 314–316) noted that Vikings made their base at *Qabtīl* (Isla Menor) at the mouth of the Guadalquivir and sacked Coria on the west bank of the river. After the first attack on Seville, the remaining inhabitants fled to Carmona. The Vikings returned to their base at *Qabtīl*, and when they attacked Seville again after a few days, the city was empty apart from a few fugitives who had sheltered in a mosque. In this version, no marvellous boy came to their rescue, and the Muslims were surrounded and killed, 'since when it has been called the "Mosque of the Martyrs"' (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: fol.186r, trans.:

315). Īsā al-Rāzī added further details about the battle at *Ṭalyāṭa*, claiming that 1,000 Vikings were killed, more than 400 captured and thirty ships were abandoned.

To the accounts of the 844 raids that Ibn Ḥayyān claimed to have taken directly from the two Rāzīs, he appended three further versions. One is attributed to Muḥammad b. ʻAbd Allāh b. al-ʻAsh'ath al-Qurashī, an obscure author of a history of Seville that was lost apart from Ibn Ḥayyān's citations from it; the author also claimed to be citing Īsā al-Rāz. (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: fols 186v–187r, trans.: 316–318; Pons 1993: 124–125). This source has little to add to the narrative of the raids, apart from an awareness that Vikings had sailed from the land of the Franks (*al-Ifranj*), a term used of the inhabitants of Western Europe in general. Unusually, this historian alluded to the earlier attack on Christian Iberia, with the note that Vikings had attacked 'our enemy, the people of Galicia (*Jilliqīya*)'; this designation was also used for the Christian north in general. He heightened the impact of the attack on Seville by linking it with pagan depredations in ancient times, quoting from a letter that ʻAbd al-Raḥmān II is supposed to have received from one of his commanders, ʻAbd Allāh ibn Kulayb:

> Coming from Beja . . . I saw along the banks of the Guadalquivir, the remains of cities, fortifications, castles and watchtowers . . . I have no doubt that the ancients built these fortifications and watchtowers solely as a defence against the *Majūs* enemy who would have been arriving at different periods of history. Over one of the gates of the city of *Qrqbh* (or *Qrqyh*; Makki and Corriente were unable to decipher this toponym) in the province of Niebla, there are statues, fashioned by the ancients, of men very similar to the *Majūs*, against whom the Muslims are struggling today, as well as representations of their ships, which without doubt were placed there as talismans to drive away [the Vikings] from the country. These works have been erased, and only traces remain.
>
> (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: fol.187r, trans.: 318)

From another obscure tenth-century historian, Mu'āwiya b. Hishām al-Shabīnasī, Ibn Ḥayyān copied what is essentially the same narrative as that of Aḥmad al-Rāzī but with even more emphasis on Naṣr's role in the victory (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: fols187r–188r, trans.: 318–321). On his return to Cordoba, Naṣr was awarded a triumph that lasted several days, together with a

long panegyric, part of which Ibn Ḥayyān reproduced, and the title *Abū-l-fatḥ* (the Victorious.). The emir also gave Naṣr a country estate (*munya*) outside Cordoba (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: fol.129r. trans.: 132). Confusingly, this narrative has two crucial battles with similar names: *Tejada*, which al-Shabīnasī located near the mouth of the Guadalquivir, and *Ṭablada*, which he placed near Seville. The latter toponym recalls *Ṭalyāṭa*, where the al-Rāzīs located the Vikings' defeat. Makki and Corriente discussed the location of the battle, or battles, without reaching a conclusion (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: trans.: 313, n.666 and 317, n.673). Ibn Ḥayyān also included a shortened version of Ibn al-Qūṭīya's narrative, but he omitted most of the anecdotes. He did not copy the section in which Ibn al-Qūṭīya extended the expedition into the Mediterranean, perhaps recognizing that Ibn al-Qūṭīya had misplaced this episode; Ibn Ḥayyān's accounts of the Mediterranean journey are collated appropriately in a later section of the *Muqtabas*. Further, Ibn Ḥayyān's citation of Ibn al-Qūṭīya minimized the role of Mūsā ibn Mūsā in coming to the aid of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II to repulse the Vikings. In the *Muqtabas*, it is not Mūsā, but his brother Lubb who serves in the emir's army. This notice comes between two accounts of Mūsā's insubordination (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: fol.185r, trans.: 311 and fol.188v, trans.: 322). In 844, the very year of Mūsā's supposed victory over Vikings, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's troops attacked his base at Pamplona and forced his submission; two years later, Mūsā rebelled again (Collins 2012: 42). Mūsā was also involved in a struggle on the northern frontier of al-Andalus with ʿAbd Allāh ibn Kulayb, one of Ibn Ḥayyān's heroes of the defence of al-Andalus against Vikings and the supposed author of the letter cited above. One should not pay too much attention to these discrepancies. By the tenth century the narrative thread of the first Viking expedition to al-Andalus had already disappeared into a prosopographical tangle as each chronicler took his own line over who was 'in' and 'out' at the Umayyad court. Two centuries after the event, for reasons that are no longer possible to determine, the loyal – and appropriately named – Naṣr (Victory) made a more plausible hero than the rebel Mūsā ibn Mūsā.

Several later historians writing in Arabic appear to have read Ibn Ḥayyān, or his sources, although none cited them in full. One of these was al-ʿUdhrī (d.1085), active in the taifa kingdoms of Almeria, Valencia and Zaragoza. He was remembered for works in several genres; the sole surviving manuscript is

part of a geography of al-Andalus that combines descriptions of topography with historical anecdotes and descriptions of the strange and the marvellous. Citing Aḥmad al-Rāzī, al-ʻUdhrī synthesized some of the information that Ibn Ḥayyān had included about the attack of 844, giving credit for the expulsion of the marauders to the Andalusi leaders whom Ibn Ḥayyān had named (al-ʻUdhrī 1965: 98–100). Two centuries later Ibn Idhārī, writing in the Maghreb, was clearly working within the same tradition. He too began with the sighting of the ships – the dark red birds of my introduction – and his Vikings follow a similar itinerary to that in Ibn Ḥayyān's account (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 87). This concordance does not necessarily enhance either the coherence or the plausibility of Ibn Idhārī's version. Like Ibn al-Qūṭīya, Ibn Idhārī rarely named his sources. He seems to have relied on a compilation by ʻArīb ibn Sa'īd, secretary to al-Ḥakam II. The editors of Ibn Idhārī's work, Colin and Lévi-Provençal, were so convinced that he was copying from ʻArīb that they inserted passages from the sole remaining manuscript of the chronicle, which covers part of the early tenth century, into the *Bayān* (ʻArīb: 79–86). Ibn Idhārī did not name ʻArīb, nor the Rāzīs, nor even Ibn Ḥayyān, as his sources for the Viking attacks, citing instead two historians who have not been identified. They provided him with conflicting accounts of the attack on Seville, and on the ebb and flow of the fighting. Ibn Idhārī concluded his long account of this episode with a victory for the Muslims at *Ṭalyāṭa*;

> At last, when war engines were used against them and reinforcements had arrived from Cordoba, Vikings were put to flight. [Muslims] killed about 500 of their men, and took four of their ships with all their cargoes. Ibn-Wazim had these burnt, after selling all that was found in them. The [Vikings] were defeated at *Ṭalyāṭa* on the 25 Safar of this year (11 November 844). Many were killed, others hanged at Seville, others hanged in the palm trees at *Ṭalyāṭa*, and thirty of their ships were burnt. Those who escaped from the bloodshed embarked. They went to Niebla and then to Lisbon and were no more heard of. They arrived at Seville on the 14 Moharram, 230 (October 1 844) and forty-two days had passed from the day when they entered Seville until those of them who were not put to the sword departed. Their general was killed. To punish them for their crimes. God gave them to our sword and destroyed them, numerous as they were. When they had been annihilated, the government made this happy event known through all the provinces, and ʻAbd al-Raḥmān also wrote to the Sinhaja tribe in Tanger, to tell them

> that with God's help he had succeeded in destroying Vikings. At the same time he sent them the heads of the general, and of two hundred of the noblest Vikings warriors.
>
> (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 88–89, trans.; Stefánsson: 35–6)

The outline of Ibn Idhārī's narrative, its names and dates, are recognizable. It has accrued a lot of extra information, although it is not clear that Ibn Idhārī himself was responsible for these additions. Overall Ibn Idhārī's treatment of Vikings is selective. Whilst he recounted the attacks on al-Andalus in detail, he said little about the Viking raid on Nakūr in *c.* 859 even in the course of several pages on the history of the town (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.1: 176–181; Chapter 4). There is little justification for adding details from Ibn Idhārī's version of the attacks on al-Andalus to modern narratives of the Vikings' activities in Iberia. By the fourteenth century the memory of what really happened had been obscured by repeated re-writing. When Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406) composed a short account of the expedition, he recognized that the dates given in his sources were inconsistent (Ibn Khaldūn *'Ibār*, vol.4: 281). He dated the arrival of Vikings outside Lisbon to 226 (840) and outlined an itinerary for their campaign that does not reach Seville until 230 (844). He ended this passage: 'One historian narrates the episode of the Vikings as though it took place in the year 246 (860), but it is possible that it was in another year. God knows best.' The memory of the Viking raid of 844 was disseminated through the Arabic sources, but we may concur with Ibn Khaldūn in having little confidence in the accuracy of its transmission.

In the period when Arabic chroniclers were compiling varying versions of the events of 844, their contemporaries writing in Latin and Romance were elaborating the deeds of Ramiro against Vikings. One of these chroniclers produced the text now known as the *Historia Silense*, perhaps written at San Isidoro in Leon after the death of Alfonso VI in 1109, which survives in a fifteenth-century manuscript (Barton and Fletcher 2000: 9–18). The author may have been attempting to write a *Vita Adefonsi* in which the deeds of Alfonso VI would match those of Charlemagne recounted in Einhard's *Vita Karoli*. He felt that he needed a back story, which he copied from three earlier chronicles. The first of these is the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*, from which he took the excerpt on the Viking raid on Galicia in 844. But now it reads 'Ramiro, already appointed king, rose up against them, and with an efficient army he

overcame most of them in the vicinity of *Farum Brecantium*, burning seventy of their ships. He returned safe and sound and with hostages' (*Historia Silense*: 143). Seventy ships would have been the bulk of an anachronistically large fleet, leaving a tattered remnant to attack al-Andalus. This number looks like a flourish by the author to enhance Ramiro's victory, a sign of the Divine favour enjoyed by the Asturian rulers whom he was promoting. A brief set of annals written in Romance at the monastery of Cardeña in the twelfth century also mentioned the seventy ships and gave Ramiro's victory extra gloss by linking it with his supposed triumph over a Muslim army at Clavijo in 834: 'He conquered and killed Vikings (*Normandos*) who entered Galicia from the sea and he burned seventy of their ships and conquered the Moors at Clavijo through a miracle of Santiago' (ES vol.23: 376–380). The first reference to the legendary battle of Clavijo is in a spurious twelfth-century charter from Compostela (Burgos Cathedral: doc. 2, 844; Collins 1983: 237). The Cardeña text goes on to praise Ramiro for his patronage of the shrine of St. James/Santiago at Compostela – although in 844 the saint's body had yet to be discovered. The pairing of Ramiro's rout of Vikings with an invented victory over the Muslims points up the role of Vikings as a foil to the northern Christians whose aim was to restore the holy Gothic realm; Vikings were another variety of pagan whom, with God's help, they would destroy.

This approach to history nourished the cycle of histories of the peninsula commissioned by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (1170–1247) (Linehan 1993: 316). Rodrigo, archbishop of Toledo and papal legate, knew about Spain's – and God's – enemies. He had raised the army that defeated the Almohads at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, a victory that set the seal of success on the Christian re-conquest of the peninsula. The first volume of Spain's new history was the *De rebus Hispanie* or *Historia Gothica*, completed in 1243. It begins with the foundation of the country by Japhet, Tubal and Hispan, but the main narrative runs from the early history of the Goths to the conquest of Cordoba. This was followed by volumes devoted to successive waves of invaders of the peninsula, ending with the *Historia Arabum*, which dealt with the aftermath of 711. In the prologue to the *Historia Arabum*, Rodrigo summed up his aims:

> I have expounded above [in the *De rebus* and other works] as was permitted, what losses of calamities Spain suffered in bitterness; now I considered to embark on a worthy end, on the destruction of the Arabs – would that they

> are the last! – if Divine Providence wishes to guard the rest from the destruction of murderers.
>
> (Rodrigo *Historia Arabum*, 87, trans.: Wood)

Vikings were supporting players in Rodrigo's pageant of history. In *De rebus*, Rodrigo placed a shortened version of the Viking (*gens Normannorum*) attack on Galicia of 844 (Rodrigo *De rebus*, vol.3: 13, 132) that made Ramiro's defeat of Vikings a prelude to Spain's far more significant victory over the Muslims at Las Navas de Tolosa. Rodrigo weighted the parallel by having Ramiro destroy seventy Viking ships, but overthrow 70,000 Saracens at Clavijo. The *Historia Arabum*, however, gave a different version of events. Rodrigo's team resorted to a Latin translation of an Arabic source or sources, yet to be identified, to fill the vast lacuna in his knowledge of the years between the mid-eighth century and the time of writing. In the course of reading this source, the compilers came to the attack on Seville. In the *Historia Arabum*, headed 'On the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān and the arrival of the ships', it begins:

> In the year of the Arabs 229, in the thirteenth year of his reign, a report was sent to him of 54 ships and 54 galleys lying off the coast at Lisbon. 'Abd al-Raḥmān wrote back to them that they should take all the necessary provisions for its defence. In the following year, many ships and greater forces came to the shore of Seville and besieged Seville for 13 days and engaged in combat with the Arabs, and with many dead, departed with much booty and many captives. From there they went to Zelziram (Algeciras), Cadiz and Sidonia with their ships, fought many battles with the Arabs and lay waste their lands with slaughter and fire and carried away much booty.
>
> (Rodrigo *Historia Arabum*, 122–123)

What Rodrigo's men read was similar although not identical to the information that Ibn Ḥayyān had collected, with the same number of ships, although the names of the Andalusi generals were, mercifully, left out and the thirteen-day siege was transferred from Lisbon to Seville. Since the episode ended with the defeat of the enemy, Rodrigo was presumably content to have it copied into his new history with a garbled account of the campaign of 859–861 tacked onto it (Chapter 4), without claiming that it had any particular significance. It is even possible that Rodrigo did not connect the ships that menaced Lisbon and Seville with the *gens Normannorum* of the *De rebus*, since he labelled the

Lisbon raiders simply as *gentes* – probably a translation of the Arabic *Majūs* – and not specifically as *gens Normannorum*.

When Rodrigo's programme of history was used as the basis for the national histories of Alfonso X and his successors, they incorporated both versions of the attacks of 844, from *De rebus* and the *Historia Arabum*. Alfonso's *Estoria de Espanna* devotes Chapter 633 to 'how king don Ramiro defeated Vikings (*Normanos*)' (vol.2: 362–363; Ward 2009) and chapter 632 to the attack on Seville (*Estoria de Espanna*, vol.2: 362). But the order of the two episodes has been reversed. It seems that the compiler did not spot the connection between the attack on Galicia from the *De rebus* and the raid on Seville from the *Historia Arabum*. Nor did he recognize the raiders on Seville as Vikings. The *Estoria de Espanna* translated Rodrigo's *gentes* as *yentas estrannas*, whilst the Vikings who attacked Galicia were called *Normanos*: the *gens Normannorum* of the *De rebus*. By now the memory of the raids on Galicia and Seville of 844 may have been held in common by Christians and Muslims, but it was confused.

In the ninth century it had been common knowledge that Vikings – the same men who pillaged and settled around the North Sea and traded along the Russian rivers to Byzantium – had extended their range to Iberia. After raiding the northern and western coasts of Asturias and Galicia, they attacked Lisbon and Seville, and perhaps threatened the Umayyad capital. Although the raiders may have settled for a short time at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, they were soon repulsed. That is perhaps as much as we can say for certain. Whether it was local forces or king Ramiro who coordinated the Christian defences, which of the emir 'Abd al-Raḥmān's generals may have participated in the defence: these seem all to be later accretions to the story, confused and confusing. Even the later sources do not claim that major damage was done. Their focus was on the response to an external threat, filtered through the prism of contemporary politics. The way that the memory of these events was preserved undermined the plausibility of nearly all the details that had been accumulated in the years since Prudentius of Troyes recorded his annals and al-Yaqūbī mentioned the attack on Seville. If these early accounts had been lost, the whole episode might have seemed legendary. Above all respect for the truth, it was important for the key players in Christian and Muslim Iberia to claim victory over Vikings. How they continued to do so we shall see in the next chapter.

4

A Mediterranean Adventure

Some fifteen years after their first campaign in Iberia, Vikings returned to the peninsula in an expedition that lasted three years and took them into the Mediterranean. The narrative of this voyage comes mainly from citations of earlier Arabic historians in Ibn Ḥayyān's eleventh-century compilation, supplemented by short references preserved in a variety of contexts. As was the case for the campaign of 844, the story of Vikings in the Mediterranean gathered more detail in the re-telling of later centuries. This expedition also featured men of the sagas who took part in improbable adventures that may, however, have a core of historical fact and which are certainly true to the spirit of the Viking enterprise. Since most of the sources are those introduced in the previous chapter, we may pass more quickly over the pitfalls of historiography, although we should always bear in mind that later authors often wrote with a contemporary slant and added colour to their stories. There are also two puzzles that are peculiar to this episode: the raiders' targets in the Mediterranean; and their supposed capture and ransoming of the ruler of Pamplona.

Several of the Christian chronicles, from the *Chronicle of Albelda* to Rodrigo's *De rebus*, recorded a Viking attack on Galicia during the reign of Ordoño I (850–866). The *Chronicle of Albelda* was more interested in Ordoño's advances against the Muslim enemy than in Vikings, but noted that a certain count Peter killed *Lordomani* (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 176); the continuator of the chronicle dated the return of *Lothomanni* to the peninsula to July 858, noting that they went on to kill a number of the inhabitants of Lisbon (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 188). The *Chronicle of Alfonso III* tracked the raiders into the Mediterranean:

> At this time Vikings (*Nordomani piratide*) again came to our shores. They then spread out all over Spain, ravaging its coasts with sword and fire. From there, crossing the sea, they invaded the city of *Naacor* (Nakūr) in Mauretania

> and killed a multitude of Chaldeans (Muslims) with the sword. Then, heading towards the islands of Mallorca and Menorca, they depopulated them with the sword. They then sailed to Greece and finally returned to their own country three years later.
>
> (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 148–149, trans.: 177)

Not all the later Latin chronicles mentioned the 859–861 campaign. There is, however, a new source of information with a unique perspective. The *Chronicon Iriense* (ES vol.20: 598–608) was probably written in Santiago but is named for the see of Iria, which was joined with Santiago de Compostela after *c.* 860. The chronicle ends with the year 984, but it may have been composed as late as the twelfth century (Isla 1984). The chronicler filtered his narrative through the ideals of the Cluniac reform that had spread through the Christian realms after Spain's transition from the 'Mozarabic' to the Roman rite in 1080. The *dramatis personae* of the *Chronicon Iriense* are models and anti-models of this reform. Among the former is bishop Ataulfus II, falsely denounced to Ordoño I for sodomy by four of his serfs (ES 20: 602). The king believed the calumny and subjected the bishop to trial by ordeal against a bull, but God demonstrated the bishop's innocence by having the bull lay his horns in the bishop's hands. Denouncing Ordoño, Ataulfus left Asturias to lead an exemplary life as a hermit. Immediately after describing the bishop's trial, the *Chronicon Iriense* noted that 'at that time, one hundred ships of the Vikings (*naves Normannorum*) came to Galicia and after three years returned to their country'. The chronicler may have placed Vikings here to show how Ordoño, whose trial of the bishop had infringed canon law, suffered divine castigation (Isla 1984: 418). The chronicle left out the king's victories against the Andalusis, which would have muddied the message about Ordoño's culpability. We will see in Chapter 6 that Vikings continued to function as instruments of divine justice in the official record of the ecclesiastical politics of Santiago.

Ibn Ḥayyān collected two accounts of the campaign of 859–861 which are similar but difficult to navigate. The problems posed by the text are compounded by the state of the unique manuscript of the second part of the *Muqtabas*, which covers the period 796–880. The section to the year 847, covering the first Viking expedition, is legible but the end of the manuscript is in a very poor condition, with whole lines missing, especially from the lower half of the folia (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [847–852]: 118–124). Lévi-Provençal, who found the

manuscript in the Qarawīyīn library in Fes, edited the section to 847, but considered the rest of the manuscript unworthy of publication. A generation later, Makki's solution was to fill the gaps with information derived from two later sources: al-ʿUdhrī and Ibn Idhārī (al-ʿUdhrī *Nuṣūs*: 119; Ibn Idhārī *Bayān* II: 96–97). Similarities between parts of Ibn Ḥayyān's narrative and that of Ibn Idhārī in particular are striking and may justify this approach. For the campaign of 859–861 as a whole, there are more details in Ibn Ḥayyān than in Ibn Idhārī's account, which does not take the episode to its end, as we shall see; nor did Ibn Idhārī copy the names of all the protagonists, which Makki found in al-ʿUdhrī. At times, Makki resorted to educated guesswork. In the citations that follow, Makki's additions are in italics.

Ibn Ḥayyān did not name his first source, but as he had cited Aḥmad al-Rāzī a few lines earlier, al-Rāzī may also be his source for this passage:

> [Report] on the *Majūs*: In this year [245AH (859) is an editorial addition] the *Majūs* – may God curse them – attacked the west coast of al-Andalus, and this was their second attack, in sixty-two ships. They found the coasts guarded; ships of the emir Muḥammad were patrolling between the confines (*ḥā'iṭ*) of *Ifranja* (probably Francia) in the east and the furthest confines of *Ghilīsīa* (Galicia, i.e. northern Iberia) in the west. Two of their ships were met by the ships deployed to patrol the confines of *Jilīqīya* (Galicia) and taken by surprise in a harbor in the region of Beja. [The Muslims] seized money, goods and prisoners from [the Viking ships] as booty. Then the ships of the *Majūs* continued along the coast until they came to the mouth of the Guadalquivir and the lands bordering on it. And [the inhabitants] were in the greatest state of alarm. The emir Muḥammad hastened to send the army to the west; he called the people to go to war against the enemy at the gates. And they hastened from all directions. The leader of the sultan's army was ʿĪsa ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbī Abda al-Ḥājib. The ships of the infidels (*al-Kufra*) went up to Seville, occupied Algeciras … *and burned the* congregational *mosque*. They abandoned the land of al-Andalus, seeking the [opposite?] shore and took possession *of it and took possession of its coasts. Then they returned to the* east *coast of al-Andalus and appeared on the coast of Tudmir. Then they came to the fortress* (ḥuṣn) *of Orihuela. They went to Ifranja* (Francia) *and over-wintered there and obtained captives and wealth. They took possession of a city that is named after them to this day. They went away to the sea of al-Andalus and more than forty ships were destroyed. They were met by the ships that had been* prepared for them by Qarqāshīsh ibn Shakrūḥ

> and Khashkhāsh, which were carrying a flask of Greek fire (*nafṭ*) and many kinds of naval armaments; tightly packed ranks of archers increased their chance of success. [The Muslims] captured two of their ships off the coast of Sidonia with much money and goods. Ibn Shakrūḥ and Khashkhāsh, the admiral of the fleet, destroyed [the ships] and killed [the Vikings]; they captured two more ships and burned all that was in them. And after that, the *Majūs* defended themselves from Khashkhāsh and [sought to] avoid him. He fought them from the prow of his ship until he met a martyr's death, may God have mercy on him.
>
> Then the remaining ships of the *Majūs* went up [the coast] until they reached the confines (*ḥā'iṭ*) of Pamplona and raided the Basques, killing some and capturing their emir Gharsīa ibn Wanaqu (García Iñiquez, ruler of Pamplona <859-*c.* 880). And they ransomed him for 70,000 [dinars]. They kept his sons as part payment of the ransom, and released him . . . During their first appearance in the region of Beja, they captured ʿAbd al-Malik and ʿAbd Allāh, the sons of Muḥammad ibn Maslama. They released ʿAbd Allāh and carried off his brother ʿAbd al-Malik. And this was the place where they took S'aḍūn, known as al-Surunbāqī.
>
> This attack did not bring them the profit that they were accustomed to, nor did the people of the coast suffer the usual depredations. [Vikings] did not find on the coast what they were expecting from the strength of their onslaught. They were met by a naval attack from the direction of Algeciras that destroyed fourteen of their ships. They were blown off course from the confines of al-Andalus and carried away in the direction of the land of the Franks. They did not meet with any success. They hastened away to their country defeated and they have not returned to this day.
>
> (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [847–880]: 307–309)

Since this author mentions the Viking defeat off Algeciras after the description of the Pamplona episode, Makki postulated that Vikings returned to al-Andalus from the north after their attack on the Basques. If we read this passage as a summing up of the failure of this Viking expedition, there is no need to invoke a second visit to al-Andalus. The author's final comment increases the probability that Ibn Ḥayyān's source was Aḥmad al-Rāzī, since there does not seem to have been another Viking attack on the peninsula until after al-Rāzī's death in 955.

The prosopography of the Andalusi response to the second Viking campaign is complicated. Different historians named different protagonists, as they had

for the attack of 844. It is not necessary to work through all the contradictions, but two comments may be made here. Some of the same people may have defended al-Andalus against Vikings on both occasions. Al-'Udhrī mentioned Lubb ibn Mūsā, the brother of Mūsā ibn Mūsā of the Banū Qasī, who had fought both for and against 'Abd al-Raḥmān II in the 840s. Lubb served the emir Muḥammad in the defence of Seville in 859; the emir rewarded him for his actions with a slave girl (Al-'Udhrī *Nuṣūs*: 31–32, cited by Lorenzo 2007: 99). Secondly, the capture of S'aḍūn al-Surunbāqī is sometimes taken as referring to a separate Viking campaign some ten or twenty years after their journey to the Mediterranean, because Ibn Ḥayyān mentioned his capture again in a later section of the *Muqtabas*. S'aḍūn al-Surunbāqī was an ally of 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Marwān, 'the Galician', who rebelled against Cordoba during the periods 868–875 and 877–878 (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [847–880]: 344–382 *passim*; Lévi-Provençal 1950–1953, vol.2: 295–299). Looking back on this rebellion, Ibn Ḥayyān said of S'aḍūn al-Surunbāqī that 'he was a prisoner of *Majūs* who had disembarked on the coasts of al-Andalus' (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [912–942]: 23). At this point in the *Muqtabas*, however, Ibn Ḥayyān's focus was not on Vikings but rather on constructing a portrait of al-Surunbāqī. The point of the Viking story is that it demonstrated the rebel's guile; Ibn Ḥayyān noted that, after his release from captivity, al-Surunbāqī refused to reimburse the Jewish merchant who had put up the money for his ransom. All this had happened some years before al-Surunbāqī's revolt against Cordoba. We do not have to postulate another Viking campaign in the 870s, for which there is no other evidence.

The second author in Ibn Ḥayyān's dossier on the expedition of 859–861, Mu'āwiya ibn Hishām, a historian who is otherwise unknown, seems to have had information that is not preserved either by al-'Udhrī or in Ibn Idhārī. Unfortunately, the state of the Fes manuscript does not allow for the reconstruction of the whole of Ibn Ḥayyān's passage from this source, and Makki was not able to find citations from later historians that might make a continuous whole from the fragment, as he had with the first section. After a lacuna, there is a reference to the Viking attack on Pamplona, to which we shall return, before Ibn Ḥayyān's citation from his second author ends with a comment on the futility of the Vikings' campaign:

> [Vikings] found the landing-places uncertain, and a trap. They went up the coast of the land of the infidel Basques . . . Then they departed. They encountered the fleets of the emir Muḥammad, assembled in force. [The Muslims] overcame many of [the Viking] ships and seized the booty that was in them. The scattered remnants of the [Viking] fleet retreated, exhausted, by the grace of God.
>
> (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [847–880]: 309)

This conclusion echoes the closing words of Ibn Ḥayyān's first author, cited above.

Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's *Historia Arabum* included a short statement on the raids of 859–861 that echoes some of the information that Ibn Ḥayyān preserved:

> In the same year [*anno Arabum CCXLV*, i.e. 859–860] sixty ships came from the North (*Normania*) and Gelzirat Alhadra and mosques were altogether despoiled and consumed by fire; then they proceeded to Africa, where they drove out many people from their homes and they returned to the coasts of Hispania, where they spent the winter, and in spring they returned to their country.
>
> (Rodrigo *Historia Arabum*: 124–125)

The translator struggled to translate the toponym *Al-jazīra al-khadrā'* (Algeciras). Nevertheless, the compiler of Alfonso X's *Estoria de Espanna* thought this information, however garbled, worthy of inclusion in his chronicle. This time, and in contrast to the *Estoria's* failure to link the Viking attacks of 844 on northern and southern Iberia, the chronicler combined the material from the *Historia Arabum* with an extract from the *De rebus* based on the passage from the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* cited above. The marriage of the two extracts resulted in chronological inconsistencies that baffled the poor compiler; he dated the expedition in three different ways to 'the ninth year of the reign of Ordoño (859), and this was Spanish Era 873 (845) and also the Year of the Incarnation of our Lord 835' (*Estoria de Espanna*, vol.2: 366). It illustrates the problems that medieval historians found in reconciling their sources. We can sympathize.

The fact that Rodrigo and several later Arabic authors mentioned the expedition of 859–861 in terms not dissimilar to Ibn Ḥayyān's two versions suggests either that all these historians relied on a common source, or that the

outline of events is reliable. Al-Ḥimyarī, a geographer who was probably writing in Ceuta at the beginning of the fourteenth century, expanded the description of Algeciras that he had read in the work of al-Idrīsī, with the note that: 'to the south-east of Algeciras there is a mosque, of medium size, called "the Mosque of the Banners". This is where *Majūs* planted their banners when they disembarked here, as the name of the mosque recalls. It has a door whose jambs are made of wood from the *Majūs* ships' (al-Ḥimyarī *Rawḍ*: 223). This is a telling image, but it seems to be a flight of fancy on al-Ḥimyarī's part to explain the name of the mosque. We will see other instances of al-Ḥimyarī's placing Vikings in the landscape of al-Andalus.

Ibn al-Qūṭīya provides an additional piece of information that other Arabic historians did not preserve. The account of the raids of 844–845 in the *History* of Ibn al-Qūṭīya, quoted in Chapter 2, continues:

> [Vikings (*Majūs*)] departed from Seville and directed themselves to Nakūr, where they took prisoner the ancestor of Ibn Ṣāliḥ, whom the emir 'Abd al-Raḥmān … ransomed from captivity. This was why the Banū Umayya have had influence with the Banū Ṣāliḥ. Then they [Vikings] ravaged the two coasts completely until they reached the land of the Byzantines and Alexandria.
>
> (Ibn al-Qūṭīya *Ta'rīkh*: 81, trans.: 101)

As we have seen, Ibn al-Qūṭīya conflated the two campaigns, perhaps because Vikings attacked Seville on both occasions. This forced him to involve 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (822–852) rather than his successor Muḥammad (852–886) in the ransom. In order to make some sense of the chronology, he added: 'That voyage took them fourteen years.'

The raid on Nakūr, together with another attack on the Maghreb, was described in an itinerary and gazetteer of the north and north-western coasts of Africa compiled by an Andalusi geographer. Al-Bakrī completed his *Book of Roads and Kingdoms* in *c.* 1068 and it survives in ten manuscripts, none of them complete. He copied, often exactly, from earlier writers, such as al-Mas'ūdī, from whom he may have taken a passage on the *Rūs* attacks on al-Andalus (Al-Bakrī *Roads and Kingdoms*, vol.1: 264). Until al-Bakrī's sources have been elucidated, we should be circumspect both about the originality and the reliability of his information. Yet his work is unique within the geographical genre in supplementing an itinerary of the Islamic world and beyond with

extensive descriptions of peoples and towns, and anecdotes both historical and fanciful. Al-Bakrī referred more than twenty times to *Majūs*, running the gamut of *Majūs* typology from Zoroastrian fire-worshippers, via the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, whose religion was *al-Majūsīya* and who worshipped idols, to the raiders from the sea (Al-Bakrī *Roads and Kingdoms*, vol.1: 868, 873). Between Awdghast and Sigilmasa, he noted a mountain of the *Majūs*, inhabited not by Vikings, but by Berbers (Al-Bakrī *Roads and Kingdoms*, vol.1: 853). In the course of a brief description of the port of Aṣīla al-Bakrī noted the arrival of raiders coming from the direction of al-Andalus: 'In the year 245 (859–60) . . . Vikings (*Majūs*) attacked this place (possibly Algeciras), after which, after leaving the coasts of al-Andalus, they were forced by a storm towards this port [Aṣīla]. Some of their ships sank on entering the roads, for which reason this place received the name "the port of the *Majūs*" ' (Al-Bakrī *Roads and Kingdoms*, vol.1: 790). Al-Bakrī dated the attack on Nakūr a year before the Vikings' arrival in Aṣīla: '*Majūs* – God curse them – landed at Nakūr, in the year 244 (858–859). They took the city, plundered it, and made its inhabitants slaves, except those who saved themselves by flight. Among their prisoners were Ama al-Raḥmān and Khanūla, daughters of Wakif ibn-Mu'tasim ibn-Ṣāliḥ. [The emir] Muḥammad ransomed them. The *Majūs* stayed eight days in Nakūr' (Al-Bakrī *Roads and Kingdoms*, vol.1: 766). Ibn Idhārī copied a shortened version, without the names of the captives (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.1: 176). Ibn Khaldūn, in a chapter dedicated to Nakūr and the Banū Ṣāliḥ, noted that 'the *Majūs* captured Nakūr with their ships . . . They took over the town and sacked it for eight days. But at last, the Barānis united with the men of Sa'īd and expelled them' (Ibn Khaldūn *'Ibār.* vol.6: 440).

It is not clear whether Viking ships reached Aṣīla and Nakūr by design, or at the mercy of prevailing winds and currents (McCormick 2001: 481–500). The port of Aṣīla, on the western coast of the Maghreb, may have been a fortified trading centre. According to Al-Bakrī, Aṣīla was protected by a wall, had a good water supply and attracted visitors with its important markets and a protected harbour; this is almost all the information we have for the port in this period. Al-Bakrī said that this was not the first time that Vikings had visited Aṣīla. On the first occasion, they had pretended to be simple visitors, looking for some treasure that they had hidden there for safe-keeping (Al-Bakrī *Roads and Kingdoms*, vol.1: 790). Adding to the implausibility of this

explanation is the fact that Al-Bakrī dated this visit before the first Viking attack on Seville, which he dated to 229 (843–844). It is impossible to rule out a Viking presence in Aṣīla in 844, but it is equally likely that the many faces of the *Majūs* that al-Bakrī himself had documented may have tempted the geographer to put together pieces of information that had no connection apart from protagonists bearing the label *Majūs*.

For Nakūr, in contrast, there is substantial information in the written sources and this is complemented by archaeological evidence. Several Arabic sources refer to Nakūr, situated ten kilometres inland, at the confluence of the Nakūr and Ghays rivers. The ruling dynasty in the region were the descendants of Ṣāliḥ ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥimyari, one of the conquerors of the Maghreb, whose grandson founded Nakūr. It was the centre of a territory which al-Ya'qūbī described as extending 'over a distance of ten days' march' which the Banū Ṣāliḥ held until at least 864 (EI vol.7: 941–943: Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.1: 176–181). In the early Middle Ages, the town had a wall of coarse brick and a large mosque, markets, gardens and orchards. It remained a regional capital under the Idrisid dynasty, who ruled the Maghreb from 788 until their defeat by the Faṭimids at the end of the tenth century. Unfortunately, apart from this reference to the hostages ransomed by Muḥammad, the sources are silent about the relationship between Nakūr and Cordoba in the mid-ninth century (Lévi-Provençal 1950–1953, vol.1: 241). Nakūr was not an obvious target for raiders. The southern shores of the Mediterranean are hostile to navigation, with shallows and islands, and reefs running far out to sea, few landmarks visible from the sea and few natural anchorages (Pryor 1988: 20). The middle of the ninth century saw the development of this region. Sandstorms and attacks by bandits had forced the gold trade from the Sudan to divert north to the Mediterranean coast. New trading centres were established and others grew. There is little evidence, however, that Nakūr was on the gold route or that the town flourished in the ninth century. A century later, when Ibn Ḥawqal travelled through North Africa, Nakūr was already falling into ruins, although the harbour of al-Mazimma on the coast (al-Ḥusayma in modern Morocco) was still in use (Ibn Ḥawqal: 78). Excavation at Nakūr revealed a much larger proportion of local hand-made ceramic than at other settlements in the region, suggesting that Nakūr had weak ties with the wider world (Boone, Myers and Redman 1990). There was little to attract pirates travelling long distances.

They may, however, have returned home with slaves – if we believe a problematic Irish text whose protagonists may be invented. The compiler of the so-called *Fragmentary Annals*, who called Vikings both *Nordmanni* and *Lochlanns*, described raids on Iberia and the Mediterranean by the sons of Ragnall, the 'King of Lochlann' (*Fragmentary Annals*: 160–163). The protagonists of this story, expelled from Lochlann with their father, went to Ireland, whence they harried the British Isles and then the South:

> Now, their pride and youthful ambition induced them to row forth across the Cantabrian Sea, i.e. the sea which is between Erin and Spain, until they reached Spain, and they inflicted many evils in Spain both by killing and plundering. They afterwards crossed the Gaditanean Straits, i.e. where the Mediterranean Sea goes into the external ocean, and they arrived in Africa and there they fought a battle with the Mauritani, in which a great slaughter of the Mauritani was made ... After this the *Lochlanns* passed over the country, and they plundered and burned the whole country; and they carried off a great host of them [the Mauritani] as captives to Erin, and these are the blue men [of Erin], for Mauri is the same as black men, and Mauritania is the same as blackness ... Long indeed were these blue men in Erin. Mauritania is situated opposite the Balearic Isles.

Even by the standards of medieval historiography, the *Fragmentary Annals* are unreliable. The text survives in one seventeenth-century manuscript, now in Brussels, of a collection of annals and legend; it was compiled in Gaelic early in the eleventh century and has been modernized at least once. McCarthy omitted the *Fragmentary Annals* from his recent study of the Irish Annals, complaining that they are 'such a distorted source ... [that they would] further complicate an already demanding discussion' (McCarthy 2010: 10). There are, however, germs of plausibility in the story of the Mauritanian black (or blue) captives. Vikings probably traded in slaves from the Maghreb, and some of them may have reached Ireland. Secondly, the capture of the 'blue men' from Mauritania is thought to have taken place just before the capture of York in 866, which is chronologically plausible. Ragnall and his sons, however, are either entirely fictional, or fictionalized versions of historical figures. According to the *Fragmentary Annals*, one of the sons dreamt that his father was in danger, and urged his brother to return home, since 'it is great folly and madness in us to be going from one country to another throughout the world, killing ourselves,

instead of defending our patrimony' (*Fragmentary Annals*: 161). The archetype of this episode – sons who take revenge for the death of their father (Tulinius 1995: 23–25, 115–121) – links Ragnall with two Scandinavians with similar names. The first is Ragnarr, king of the Danes, whose exploits take up Book Nine of the *History of the Danes* of Saxo Grammaticus (Chapter 7), and the second is Ragnarr Loðbrók of the Norse sagas. Several scholars have tackled the identity and historicity of these figures without coming to a satisfying conclusion (Smyth 1977: 29–34, 54–67; McTurk 1991: 1–6, 39–40). It is possible that aspects of Ragnall, Ragnarr and Ragnarr Loðbrók are based on the career of a genuine Viking called Reginheri (also known as Ragneri, Reginerius or Ragenarius) who sacked Paris in 845 and died shortly afterwards (Smyth 1977: 98). McTurk, however, argued that Loðbrók is the name of the mother rather than the father of the sons of Ragnarr Loðbrók. The first author to link Ragnarr with Loðbrók was Ari Thorgilsson (d.1148), whose *Íslendingabok* says that Ivarr, son of Ragnarr Loðbrók, killed the English king Edmund. Only one of the four, or possibly six, quasi-historical figures to be remembered as the sons of Loðbrók was linked with the expedition of 859–861 (McTurk: 1991: 39–40). Thus the story of Ragnall and his sons in the *Fragmentary Annals* is unlikely to have much evidential value for Scandinavians in the South.

Vikings were not the only sea raiders operating in the Mediterranean. The presence of Muslim and other freebooters complicates the interpretation of the evidence for Vikings. Piracy was 'a systemic epiphenomenon of connectivity' (Horden and Purcell 2000: 387), parasitic on the trade between south-west Italy and North Africa in the ninth and tenth century and on the ports which served it (Eickhoff 1961: 51–60; Bolin 1968). The majority of the pirates may have been Muslims – although the label 'Saracen' and its cognates is almost as misleading as '*Majūs*'. Muslim enclaves in southern Italy were a bulwark of the slave trade to the Maghreb (Wolf 2012). There were nests of Muslim corsairs in Candia in Crete from *c.* 824 to 896, Tarsus and Tripoli between 842 and 963, and in Aghlabid and Faṭimid Sicily, as well as in the Maghreb (Pryor 1988: 103). Pirates operating from bases in al-Andalus travelled as far as Alexandria (Manzano 1998). The ninth-century Sicilian saint Elias the Younger was captured twice by Christian African slave merchants, according to his *Life*, which was probably written in the 930s (McCormick 2001: 246–247). Negotiations for the release of captives might have enabled

the citizens of Mediterranean ports to identify their assailants, but it is possible that after a lightning raid from the sea, coastal communities did not know what, or who, had hit them. In their chronicles, medieval historians listed Viking raids with the attacks of other pirates. No group was more 'Other' than the rest; writers condemned their deeds, not their religion (Goetz 2009: 59–64). In the *Annals of St-Bertin*, Viking attacks on Francia were juxtaposed to those of Saracens and Moors:

> At that time, [842] a fleet of Northmen (*Nordomannorum*) made a surprise attack at dawn on the *emporium* called Quentovic, plundered it and laid it waste, capturing or massacring the inhabitants of both sexes. They left nothing in it except for those buildings which they were paid to spare. Moorish pirates (*Maurorum pyratae*) sailed up the Rhône to near Arles, ravaging everything on their route, and got away completely unscathed, their ships laden with booty (*AB* a.842, trans.: 53) . . . Greek pirates (*pyratae Grecorum*) ravaged Marseilles in Provence. No one offered any resistance and the pirates left unscathed. The Northmen (*Nordomannos*) laid waste the township [*vicus*] of Melle and set it on fire (*AB* a.848, trans.: 66) . . . The Northmen (*Nordomanni*) attacked the city of Périgueux in Aquitaine and returned unscathed to their ships. The Moors and Saracens (*Mauri et Saraceni*) sacked the Italian city of Luni (*Luni*), and without meeting the least resistance ravaged the whole coast along to Provence.
>
> (*AB* a.849, trans.: 68)

In his entry for 859 Prudentius did not mention Viking attacks on Iberia and the Maghreb, but he noted their attacks on southern Francia: 'Danish pirates (*pyratae Danorum*) made a long sea-voyage, sailed through the straits between Spain and Africa and then up the Rhône. They ravaged some *civitates* and monasteries, and made their base on an island called the Camargue' (*AB* a.859, trans.: 90). After over-wintering in the Camargue, the raiders sailed up the Rhône to attack Valence in the following year (*AB* a.860), although it would be stretching a point to equate their base with what Ibn Idhārī described as a 'city where they settled, and which today is called by their name' (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 96–97, trans.: Stefánsson: 40–41). Ado, bishop of Vienne (850–874), who kept a chronicle to 869, did not mention Viking raids on the Rhône. His silence does not mean that no raids occurred, although Ado did refer to Saracen pirate attacks both on Vienne and on Septimania in the eighth century (Ado of Vienne: col. 121). Most of the piracy in southern Francia that was worthy

of note by contemporaries and later generations involved Muslims rather than Vikings (Senac 1982). This was true of the Camargue, supposedly the site of a Viking camp. The area belonged to the archdiocese of Arles. Prudentius described it as 'extremely well-endowed; most of the abbey's lands (of St-Caesarius, Arles) lay there, and the Saracens used to have a trading port (*portus*) on it' (*AB* a.869, trans.: 163). Whether these 'Saracens' originated in al-Andalus or the Maghreb is unclear. Ten years after the Viking attack, archbishop Roland was captured there by 'Saracen' raiders and his supporters were forced to pay a huge ransom, although Roland was dead by the time he was returned to them. It is likely that the emphasis by Prudentius and his successors in the *Annals of St-Bertin* on Saracen rather than Viking activities in the Mediterranean reflects the relative importance of pirates of different origins. Rather than being something exceptional, a Viking settlement in Francia would simply have been 'a *conventus* of foreigners', one of many around the Mediterranean (Horden and Purcell 2000: 399).

The Vikings' further exploits in the Mediterranean are obscure. A later entry in the *Annals of St-Bertin* supports the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*'s statement that Vikings spent two winters either in Francia or elsewhere in the Mediterranean; in 862, Vikings who had attacked the Rhône joined with those whom Charles the Bald had expelled from the Seine and the Marne, before sailing to Brittany (*AB* a.862). It is possible that, as the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* and Ibn al-Qūṭīya recorded, they had roamed the Mediterranean before returning to northern Francia. Only the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* mentioned attacks on Majorca and Minorca; Rodrigo added Ibiza and Formentera to the list, presumably from his knowledge of geography rather than from better information about Viking activity in the Balearics (Rodrigo *De rebus*: 135–136). Ermentarius of Noirmoutier, writing within a decade of the events he described, said that Vikings active in Francia went on to attack Italy.

> An almost immeasurable fleet of Norse ships sailed up the Seine river ... they purchased by tribute what they should have defended with arms, and the kingdom of the Christians succumbed. The Northmen attacked Spain besides; they entered the Rhône River and they devastated Italy. While everywhere so many domestic and foreign wars were raging, the year of the Incarnation of Christ 857 past.
>
> (*Ermentarius*: 302, trans.: 11)

The year 857, if it refers to Vikings in the Mediterranean, is too early. The *Annals of St-Bertin* for 860, however, corroborates Viking depredations in Italy; 'the Danes who had been on the Rhône made for Italy, where they took Pisa and other *civitates*, sacked them, and laid them waste' (*AB* a.860, trans.: 93).

More than a century later, Dudo of St-Quentin narrated a Viking attack on Luni in his *History of the Normans*, written for the dukes and prelates of Normandy sometime between 996 and 1015 (Dudo *De moribus*). Based on literary rather than annalistic models, Dudo's work has been described as 'a deeply unreliable history' [which left] 'a hundred-year void in the history of the Normans' (Hanawault 1994: 111). In his attempt to flatter his patrons, Dudo contrasted the civilized Scandinavians who had settled in Normandy with predatory Vikings, whom he called Danes. A prime example of the latter was Hasting, who had desecrated the church of St-Quentin, amongst many others:

> When they [the Danes] had laid waste everything they had seen, and had met with no serious military resistance throughout the whole of Francia . . . they were called together to decide what more they were to do on their campaign, and the most infamous of all, Hasting (Dudo called him Alstingus), spoke by himself on behalf of the others . . . 'let us go to Rome, and force it to submit to our dominion like Francia'. This plan suited them all, and the pirates hoisted their sails and turned their prows away from Frankish coasts. And when they had encountered heavy seas in all directions, and had conquered lands and coast hither and thither, hoping to reach Rome, which is the mistress of the nations, undetected, they arrived in their ships at the city called Luni. And the chief men of the city were terrified by the fearsome invasion of so many men, and they strengthened the place with numerous armed warriors. The blasphemer Hasting observed that the city could not be forcibly taken by all his men, and he thought of a crafty plan.
>
> (Dudo *De moribus*: 132, trans.: 17–18)

Hasting made it known that he was near death, and asked for the bishop of Luni to baptize him. Shortly afterwards a bier with the apparently dead Viking leader lying on it was carried into the city. Once inside the walls, Hasting burst out, and with his followers massacred the inhabitants of Luni, which they were annoyed to find was not Rome after all.

Like Ragnall, Hasting may have a historical core, but he became both exotic and ubiquitous in later French and Scandinavian sources. The historical Hasting was not active in western Europe in 859–861; he probably did not

start attacking Francia until 866 at the very earliest, and perhaps not for another two decades (Amory 1979). He was the leader of a fleet in the Loire, the Somme and the Thames between 882 and 892; the *Annals of St-Vaast* dated his attacks on Francia to 890–891 (*Annals of St-Vaast*: 337). A later version of Dudo's narrative, composed by William of Jumièges in *c.* 1070, implicated another supposed son of Ragnarr Loðbrók, Bjorn Ironside, in the attack on Luni (William of Jumièges *Gesta*: xxxvii). Bjorn may have been based on a historical figure, Berno, who was active as a Viking leader on the Seine in the 850s and so he could have joined the Mediterranean expedition (*Chronicon Fontanellense*, MGH SS vol.2: 301–304, a.855; *AB* a.858). The ruse by which Hastings and Bjorn entered Luni became one of the most popular strands of the Norman myth; the same stratagem was attributed to Robert Guiscard, Harald Hardrada and the emperor Frederick II. Yet, like Aṣīla and Nakūr, Luni was not an obvious target. The town had been a thriving port of the Roman Empire, but after the Lombards seized the coastal towns of Liguria from the Byzantines in *c.* 643, Luni's Roman buildings were plundered for stone, and environmental degradation contributed to the town's rapid decline (Balzaretti 2013: 48–49). Dudo's story may have been inspired by his knowledge of the Muslim attack on Rome in 846, which several contemporary texts recorded (Gantner 2012). He may also have read in the *Annals of St-Bertin* how 'the Moors and Saracens attacked the Italian city of Luni . . .' (above) and selected Luni as the target of Hastings' fictitious exploits. This is little more than a faint memory – at best – of the Viking campaign in the Mediterranean.

The same may be said of the raid on Constantinople, although here there is a complicating factor – the presence of Viking *Rūs* from the north. In 860 there was a well-attested Viking incursion on the outskirts of Constantinople, graphically described in a sermon written by the patriarch Photios during the attack:

> Why has this dreadful bolt fallen on us out of the farthest north? . . . Is it not for our sins that all these things have come upon us? . . . For this reason, a people has crept down from the north . . . Woe is me, that I see a fierce and savage tribe fearlessly poured round the city, ravaging the suburbs, destroying everything, ruining everything, fields, house, herds, beasts of burden, women, children, old men, youths, thrusting their sword through everything, taking pity on nothing, sparing nothing.
>
> (Photios *Sermon* 1, trans.: 82)

Photios returned to this outrage in a later sermon, describing the attackers as 'obscure, insignificant and not even known' (Photios *Sermon* 2, trans.: 96). Although Photios' designation of the attackers as 'a people . . . from the north' owed more to the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah than to geographical precision, it is probable that the men who attacked Constantinople came to Byzantium via the Russian river system; in the Caspian Sea they may have transferred to larger vessels with the aid of the Khazars, allowing them to carry off significant numbers of Greek slaves (Shepard, forthcoming). Photios, who may have been of Khazar origin – he was nicknamed 'Khazar-face' – wanted to emphasize that the raiders had nothing to do with him, and he stereotyped them as barbarians. This episode has been much debated in Russian historiography; even Catherine the Great got involved (Vasiliev 1946: 123). In his book on the attack Vasiliev argued that Vikings who sailed the Mediterranean from the Straits of Gibraltar also reached the outskirts of Constantinople, but in the following year. He based this conclusion mainly on a brief entry in a chronicle compiled in Venice, which noted: 'Vikings (*Normanorrum gentes*) approached Constantinople with 360 ships, but being unable to damage the city they thoroughly devastated the suburbs, killed many people and returned home in triumph' (*Chronicon Venetum*: 18). The *Chronicon Venetum* was probably written by John the Deacon, who served as the Doge of Venice's ambassador to Otto III in 995. The chronicler did not date Viking activities in the Mediterranean, but on the shaky basis that the next dated episode in the chronicle is 863, and that John the Deacon mentioned 360 ships rather than the 200 in Byzantine sources for the attack of 860, Vasiliev thought that this raid on the suburbs of Constantinople must be separate from that of the *Rūs*; he dated it to 861, adducing other pieces of evidence of doubtful value, among them a passage from Saxo Grammaticus' *History of the Danes*, which has Ragnarr sailing to the Hellespont (trans.: Fisher: 290). The Byzantine chronicles did not mention a raid in 861; they are less helpful on elucidating the problem, Vasiliev argued, because the Greeks sometimes mistook Viking pirates for Muslims raiding from Crete and elsewhere in the Mediterranean (Vasiliev 1946: 150). In the absence of corroborative detail, the plausibility of a raid on Byzantium from the south remains unresolved. It is not inconceivable that groups of *Rūs* travelling to Byzantium might have made contact with a band of Vikings sailing to Byzantium through the Mediterranean in order to make a

concerted attack on the city. It is a reminder of the extent of what Abrams has labelled the Scandinavian 'diaspora': men with a common origin who could have united in a common purpose (Abrams 2012).

The final episode in the Vikings' expedition of 859–861 – the attack on Pamplona and ransom of García ibn Wannaqo (García Iñiguez) for the fabulous sum of 60,000 or 70,000 dinars – also reads like a saga, but is more likely to be a simple misreading of the sources by both medieval and modern historians. The first of Ibn Ḥayyān's two accounts of the events of 859–861 is the earliest reference to this story; it was subsequently taken up by later historians, who did not agree on the exact sum handed over (Ibn al-Athīr *Kāmil*, vol.7: 91; Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 96–97; Ibn Khaldūn *'Ibār*, vol.4: 284). It begins: 'the rest of the ships of the *Majūs* continued up [the coast] until they reached the confines (*ḥā'iṭ*) of Pamplona . . .' The word *ḥā'iṭ*, which Vernet translated as 'walls' (1971: 403) and García Gómez and Lévi-Provençal as 'foot'(Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847], trans.: García Gómez and Lévi-Provençal, 1954: 309), conjures up the picture of a band of Vikings dragging their boats up the Ebro all the way from the Mediterranean. Among the medieval authors, Ibn al-Athīr has helped to compound this misconception by noting that Viking ships 'went up to the *madīna* of Pamplona' (Ibn al-Athīr *Kāmil*, vol.7: 91). Yet whilst the term *madīna* usually means a walled city, it was also used to indicate a wider area. Nor is the name 'Pamplona' in the Arabic sources restricted to the city alone. Ibn Ḥayyān referred several times to a territory called 'the land of Pamplona' (*arḍ*/*bilād Banbalūna*), probably the kingdom of Navarre ruled by García Iñiguez. If *ḥā'iṭ*, which does sometimes translate as 'wall', is rendered as 'confines/limits', as in the references to 'the confines of Francia' (*ḥā'iṭ Ifranja*; above) where it clearly cannot mean 'wall', this saves Vikings having to carry their boats at least part of the way from the northern coast or navigating the whole length of the Ebro. There may be another explanation for the presence of *Majūs* in Pamplona. A separate group of Vikings who were active in Aquitaine could have extended their activities southwards without sailing on around the peninsula, although there is no evidence that they did so (Pons Sanz 2001). It is also possible that this episode is another instance of confusion over the term *Majūs*. The territory of Navarre/Pamplona, although poor, was strategically important and suffered repeated attacks since it bordered both on the Andalusi salient that was

intermittently under the control of the Banū Qasī, and on the expanding kingdom of Asturias, later Leon-Castile (Collins 2012: 205–211). There are several references in the Arabic and Latin sources to triangular struggles involving the Asturians, the Umayyads and Navarre in this period (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847] 'Textos inéditos'). According to the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*, in 859 Ordoño besieged a fortress, *Al-Bayḍa*, which may have been within the territory of Pamplona (Lorenzo 2007: 6) and was held by Mūsā ibn Mūsā, the erstwhile friend and foe of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 146–147; Collins 2012: 74–75). Mūsā was supported by his brother-in-law García, probably the García Iñiguez captured by the *Majūs*. As we saw in Chapter 2, not all the *Majūs* active in this region were Vikings. If it was the Asturians and their neighbours, on foot or horseback, rather than Vikings who were at the borders, or even the walls, of Pamplona, the story of the capture and ransoming of García Iñiquez makes more sense, although it is less dramatic. The ships of the *Majūs* may have been added to the Arabic account by someone, perhaps Aḥmad al-Rāzī, who connected this episode with the Viking campaign in the Mediterranean that he had recounted immediately before it. Not all the later Arabic historians mentioned the attack on Pamplona. Ibn Idhārī followed his account of Vikings in the Mediterranean with a passage about an Umayyad campaign against Pamplona in which García and his allies repulsed the Muslims. Even Ibn Idhārī, who did not baulk at the implausible, did not describe ships going up to the walls of Pamplona.

The expedition of 859–861, like that of 844, seems to have involved a single band of adventurers. Returning to the scene of Viking incursions in northern Iberia and al-Andalus, but meeting with little success, they sailed on to raid targets on the shores of the Mediterranean. Here they may have taken captives for ransom or to trade as slaves. Vikings seem to have over-wintered in Francia, perhaps waiting on the northern shore of the Mediterranean for favourable tides and currents to exit the sea through the Straits of Gibraltar. They may even have sailed to Italy, Alexandria and Constantinople. But they almost certainly passed by Pamplona without collecting 70,000 dinars; at the very least, this booty has yet to be unearthed in their homelands. The detail of their exploits was recreated as saga by Arabic, Irish, Latin and Scandinavian storytellers but it would be many years before Vikings returned to the South.

5

Waiting for the Barbarians

Compared with elsewhere in western Europe, Iberia was brushed only lightly by the Viking scourge. Yet the irruption of marauders from the sea inspired fear. From the late ninth to eleventh centuries, the people of both northern and southern Iberia took defensive measures against them. Written sources and inscriptions refer to Asturian kings and clerics and to Umayyad emirs and their officials as the sponsors of walls, towers and fleets. The construction and maintenance of effective defences was incumbent upon any ruler. This duty was rarely spelled out, but a scholar based in Iraq, Qudāma ibn Ja'far (d.948), stated that the governor of a coastal region was responsible for its sea defences. Towers were to be constructed and a watch maintained (cited by Picard 1997a: 146). Watchtowers and fortified garrisons appeared along the coasts of northern Iberia, al-Andalus and the Maghreb. Dockyards were constructed and fleets launched to deter the marauders from landing. Some of these structures remain; archaeologists have found traces of others. Now there is some material evidence to balance the witness of the written sources. Putting the two together, however, is not straightforward. It is often the case that the dates given in the written sources do not fit the material remains. Among the few surviving inscriptions relating to defensive structures, some relate to the narrative of the chronicles, but others seem to have no context. All this evidence must be treated with care. For this reason, this chapter examines the question of defences separately from the narrative of specific Viking attacks, as far as this is possible. Some of the evidence for fortifications and fleets rightly belongs with the two ninth-century Viking campaigns already discussed. Most of it, however, is no earlier than the tenth century. Improved defences may have been, at least in part, responsible for a long period free of Viking attack. But if the rulers of Iberia and the Maghreb were fortifying their coasts against Vikings, the timing is odd. This was not a period of documented Viking raiding

elsewhere in Europe. The status of Vikings in the world beyond Iberia was changing as they morphed from freebooters to rulers and settled into embryo statehood in Normandy and Kiev. It seems that there were no significant Viking campaigns in the Iberian peninsula in the tenth century until the end of the 960s. Thus the evidence that the new coastal defences of Iberia or the Maghreb were ever used against Vikings, rather than against pirates of other origins whom the sources occasionally mention, is tenuous. This chapter considers a range of defensive measures that may have been deployed against Vikings. The narrative of the tenth-century Viking raids is deferred to the next chapter.

The first line of defence was a wall. There is no indication that Vikings ever managed to enter a fortified settlement in the South – unless one believes the two implausible stories considered in the last chapter, of Hasting's capture of Luni and the Viking attack on Pamplona. On the other hand, al-Idrīsī, writing in the twelfth century, said that lack of a wall had exposed the inhabitants of the port of Saltes (*Shalṭīsh*) on the southern coast of al-Andalus to repeated raids. Al-Idrīsī noted that Saltes did not have a wall (he used the word *sūr*, which can mean either a wall or an enclosure of any sort), indeed not even a palisade (*ḥaṭhīra*); Vikings kept coming back, and every time the people were forced to flee in haste (Al-Idrīsī *Nuzhat*: 179). It is difficult to date the walling of towns as a response to Vikings in particular. Recent archaeological findings suggest there was a resurgence in the use of stone in the tenth century. Earlier, a loss of skill in stone-dressing had led to a reliance on materials such as earth and wood, and on local building techniques; stone-dressing gradually re-emerged only during the course of the ninth century, making more extensive building possible (Gurriarán 2004). There are a few references to coastal towns that were walled. Ibn Ḥawqal, describing the route between Seville and Lisbon in the 940s, mentioned walls at Niebla, Lepe and Alcacer do Sal: all settlements that were vulnerable to sea-borne attack (Ibn Ḥawqal: 115). Almeria may have had a stone wall by the middle of the tenth century and Roman fortifications at the port of Ossonoba (Faro) may have been reinforced at about the same time (Picard 1997b: 96).

Only Seville acquired walls as a direct response to a Viking raid, at least according to the written sources. Several historians, who may have been writing independently of each other, noted that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II built walls

around the city after the Viking raids of 844. One of the emir's advisors, the legal scholar and historian Ibn Ḥabīb, sent him a letter calling for the strengthening of Seville's defences. Ibn Ḥabīb argued that this was more urgent than 'Abd al-Raḥmān's plans to enlarge the Great Mosque in Cordoba, although he would be able to afford to do both, God willing (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: f.188v; trans.: 163). The most detailed reference to the wall around Seville comes from Ibn al-Qūṭīya:

> The ministers advised the building of a wall around Seville and the emir entrusted that to Abdallāh ibn Sinān, from among the Syrian clients, who had been close to him while he was a boy, and after becoming ruler he had elevated him. He made the Pilgrimage to Mecca, but his return coincided with the invasion and he was chosen to build the wall around Seville. His name is inscribed on the gateways of the city.
>
> (Ibn al-Qūṭīya *Ta'rīkh*: 81, trans.: 101)

Characteristically, Ibn al-Qūṭīya was more interested in the man responsible for the work than in the wall itself. Abdullāh ibn Sinān is an obscure figure in Umayyad prosopography; perhaps an inscription with his name was still legible when Ibn al-Qūṭīya composed his history. The geographer al-Bakrī noted that 'Seville was mostly wisely enclosed by a stone wall by the imām 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥakam, which he built after the victory of the *Majūs* over it' (Al-Bakrī *Roads and Kingdoms*, vol.1: 904). Al-Bakrī could have seen walls around Seville in 1085–1086, when he was in the city as the ambassador of the ruler of Almeria (Al-Bakrī *Roads and Kingdoms*, vol.1: 11). It is not clear whether these were the wall that Ibn al-Qūṭīya described. The earliest fortification excavated so far in Seville is the Alcazar (fortress), founded in the 880s according to written evidence (Valor 2007: 143–144). A wall around the city may have been in existence at the turn of the tenth century, when it appears to have helped the people of Seville to sustain a rebellion against the Umayyads in Cordoba (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [912–942]: 80, trans.: 71). Walls around Seville and other fortifications in the basin of the Guadalquivir may have helped to protect the city from Viking attack in 859 (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: f.179v., trans.: 292). Although, according to Ibn al-Qūṭīya (see below) and Ibn Idhārī (*Bayān*, vol.2: 96–97), Viking ships entered the mouth of the Guadalquivir, there is no report of any destruction caused by Vikings during this episode.

Toponyms and archaeology suggest that there were thousands of watch towers in al-Andalus, of which some 340 remain (Pavón 1999: 291), but they are difficult, if not impossible, to date. The term used in Spain and Portugal for watchtower – *atalaya*, from the Arabic *ṭāli'a*, to view – was also used by Christian authors referring to constructions of a later period. In contrast to the Maghreb, where such towers were confined to the coast, in Iberia they were also sited on high points and along the principal roads and rivers. Chains of beacons communicated the arrival of the enemy; a fourteenth-century author, Ibn Marzuq, said that news of the arrival of raiders off the coast of the Maghreb could be spread from Alexandria to Ceuta in a single night (cited in Pavón 1999: 289). There is a little archaeological evidence linking some of the towers on the south-western coast with the Viking period. At Palmela, on the right bank of the Tajo at Alcacer do Sal, and at Setubal, archaeologists have uncovered rectangular fortifications dating to the Umayyad period (Picard 2001: 152–159). The fortress at Castelo Velho de Alcoutim may have been founded in the ninth century to defend the river Guadiana below Merida (Branco *c.* 1999: 195). It is, however, difficult to distinguish constructions of the Islamic period from those of earlier and later times. Pottery found at some of these sites indicates that they were in continuous occupation from the Roman period through the Early Middle Ages and were used by Christians after the re-conquest. Most of the building and restoration of watchtowers seems to have been undertaken in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Picard 1997a: 148) but coastal towers were still being reinforced in the seventeenth century, against Barbary pirates. It is a reminder that the threat to Iberia and the Maghreb of seaborne attack did not vanish at the end of the Viking Age.

After Vikings took Aṣīla, 'the port of the *Majūs*', said al-Bakrī '… [the Muslims] decided to construct a *ribāṭ*' (Al-Bakrī *Roads and Kingdoms*, vol.1: 790–791). It has been assumed that this was also a common response to Viking incursions in al-Andalus: 'A new chain of forts had also been constructed in response to the Viking raids of the ninth century, distinguished by their *rapita* (Arabic *ribāṭ*) place names' (Price 2008: 467). Yet the chronological relationship between *ribāṭs* and Vikings is complicated. Ibn Ḥayyān noted that Coria, west of Seville 'has continued to be a *ribāṭ*' but he dated the building of a mosque there to the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, which was not a period of Viking raids (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [796–847]: f.186r, trans.: 314). Many of the *ribāṭs*

dotted across the Islamic world were already in existence before the Viking Age, and more were built over the course of several centuries. The term *ribāṭ* is, like *Majūs*, one whose ubiquity and apparent simplicity belie a range of meanings. *Ribāṭ*, from the Arabic root *r.b.ṭ* – to bind or connect, when used as a religious term – is close in meaning to the Latin *religere*. To perform *ribāṭ* was to undergo a period of spiritual devotion, sometimes (but not always) in a building, also called a *ribāṭ* or *munastīr*, designed for this purpose (Kennedy 2011; Epalza 2004: 9). From the earliest references to *ribāṭ* by scholars such as Ibn Ḥabīb (cited in Ibn Abī Zamanīn *Qidwāt al-Gāzī*, *passim*), the term also had a military connotation: a fourteenth-century definition of *ribāṭ* is: 'the exclusive dedication to Holy War and vigilance [on the frontiers]' (cited by Calero and Martínez 2004: 227).

The earliest reference to a *ribāṭ* in al-Andalus was attributed to the tenth-century historian al-Rāzī, who mentioned a place called *al-Rabiṭa*, possibly Arrabida near Setubal, south of Lisbon (Lévi-Provençal 1950–1953: 90). The governor of Arrabida also controlled the fortification at Alcacer do Sal (*Qasr Abū Danis*); he warned the caliph of the arrival of Vikings off this part of the coast in 966. Al-Rāzī also mentioned a *ribāṭ* at Fuengirola, near Malaga. Further east, Almeria may have started as a *ribāṭ*; the name Almeria (*Alamarīya*) itself could mean 'watchtower'. Al-Udhrī, a native of the town, described its evolution. 'Almeria is not a city of ancient construction; on the contrary the Arabs adopted it as a *ribāṭ* and constructed defences there. It is surrounded by an impregnable stone wall (*sūr ṣakhir*), which 'Abd al-Raḥmān III built in 343/954–955' (Lirola 2005: 31). The geographer al-Ḥimyarī, who called al-Andalus 'a land of *jihād* and *ribāṭ*', elaborated al-'Udhrī's report: 'When the *Majūs* arrived in Almeria and harried the coasts of al-Andalus and the Maghreb, the Arabs adopted it as a *ribāṭ*, and constructed watchtowers (*maḥāri*). People went there to do *ribāṭ*' (Al-Ḥimyārī *Rawḍ*: 223). As we saw in the previous chapter, al-Ḥimyārī was on the lookout for connections between *Majūs* and the human geography of al-Andalus; he noted that an arsenal (*dār a-ṣinā'a*) was constructed at Carmona, near Cordoba, after the attack on al-Andalus in 844 (Al-Ḥimyārī *Rawḍ*: 421). Al-Ḥimyārī identified the fortification at San Carlos de la Rapita (the *ribāṭ* of Kahkī), situated near the mouth of the river Ebro, as the site of a Viking encampment, although he confused it with Qabṭīl, in the Guadalquivir (Al-Ḥimyārī *Rawḍ*: 454). San Carlos de la Rapita

may be dated to the end of the tenth century on onomastic grounds, but it is not mentioned in the sources until the twelfth century (cited by Epalza 2004: 16). The *ribāṭ* at Kakhī was a locus of legend. Al-Zuḥrī of Granada noted the existence of an inexhaustible well; a force of 50,000 men camped there, and still the water level did not drop (cited by Bramon 1985: 521–522). It is impossible to find the nuggets of fact that might be hidden in these accounts.

In al-Andalus, a large number of toponyms in *rábita/ribāṭ* and a few in *munastīr* (monastery) are grouped along the eastern seaboard all the way from Alicante to the frontier (Franco 2004: 98). On the west coast there are fewer such toponyms, but they stretch as far as Oporto, on the river Duero, and include a significant cluster in the area around Lisbon (Catarino 2004). Most of them have left no physical traces, and where they can be dated and characterized, they seem to be no earlier than the twelfth century and to have been local retreats with no military function (Picard 1997b: 88). The biographical dictionaries – brief lives of scholars and other prominent men, but only occasionally women – show that some of them entered a *ribāṭ* for spiritual and perhaps military reasons. One man spent the last few months of his life in three different *ribāṭ*s in the district of Silves. Another gave away all his money and lived as an ascetic at *al-Rihānā*, in the same district (Calero and Martínez 2004: 49–58). The fortress of Silves, at the mouth of the river Guadalete, was well situated for pious Muslims who wished to fight a *jihād* against Vikings. Yet the biographical dictionaries do not say that this was their intention. Excavation at the site has not solved the question of its function; the earliest securely dated remains are of an eleventh-century cistern, although Silves could have been fortified before this date (Torres, Gómez and Marcías 2007: 123). The practice of spiritual retreat was not an exclusively Muslim activity. Ships coming from the Mediterranean into the Atlantic were forced to wait for a favourable wind, sometimes for several weeks, before going round Cape St. Vincent at the extreme south-west of the peninsula. Here a monastery dedicated to Vincent became a pilgrimage site for both Christians and Muslims. The nearby *ribāṭ* of Arrifana, which has been excavated, was not founded until *c.* 1130. If Cape St. Vincent was a good place to lie in wait for Vikings, the sources do not say so.

It is not clear whether there is a connection between *rábita* place names and the ruins of small fortifications known as *ḥuṣn* whose function has been much

discussed (Bazzana 1998). Some scholars have connected *huṣn* along the coast with Viking activity; others see them as the strongholds of local rebels. A local function for *ḥuṣn* is likely, but the period over which these fortifications may have been constructed and reused extends from the Roman period through to the frontier wars between Christians and Muslims after the fall of the Umayyads, and it is impossible to generalize about their uses. Only the ruins of Guardamar del Segura, south of Alicante, date from the right period to be linked to Vikings. The (now) appropriately named Guardamar was uncovered in 1984. It does not appear in the written sources, but in 1897 a dedication inscription for a mosque founded in 944 was found nearby (Azuar 2007: 82–84). Archaeologists have identified an unusual arrangement of four small mosques built back-to-back. There are twenty-two cells for the occupants, perhaps modelled on Christian monastic building but each with its own *mihrab* indicating the direction of Mecca. A graffito records the commitment of one *murābiṭ* to holy war (Kennedy 2011: 170). Guardamar, however, may have had an agricultural function, for exploitation of the salt pans, rather than being a military base. It was abandoned shortly after 1000. Some three kilometres to the south, and very close to the sea is a small oratory, dated to the tenth-to-eleventh centuries by a single coin from 1037–1042. Nearby stands a tower of a similar date. Neither, according to the excavators of the site, are ideally placed for defence (García Menárguez and Franco 2104).

The main evidence for coastal *ribāṭ*s comes from the Maghreb. The evidence linking coastal defences with Vikings is tenuous, but the surviving fortifications themselves, together with written references to coastal defence, shed some light on the Andalusi material. The most famous *ribāṭ*, at Monastir (Figure 5.1), was founded in 796, well before the first Viking expeditions to Iberia and the Mediterranean. Sousse was fortified by the Aghlabids in 821 (Kennedy 2011); writing about it more than two centuries later, al-Bakrī mentioned two foundations called *ribāṭ*. One was situated outside the town and consisted of a small mosque with a *majmā'a*, a convent for holy men. Inside Sousse was the 'guard of the *ribāṭ*, the home of those who do good and holy works' (Al-Bakrī *Roads and Kingdoms*, vol.1: 35–36 and 38). Legal texts, compiled in the later Middle Ages from judgements issued in the preceding centuries, which outline the charitable bequests that financed the *ribāṭ*s in the Maghreb, show that the inhabitants combined a life of prayer with some military duties, and that these

Figure 5.1 *Ribāṭ* of Monastir.

were mainly confined to watching the coasts (García Sanjuán 2004). For this reason, says one *fatwa*, the men were not allowed to return to their families at night. The *ribāṭ*s continued to play a role in the coastal defence of the Maghreb into the Early Modern period.

In the recollection of Ibn al-Qūṭīya, the building of the wall around Seville in 845 was followed by the expansion of the Umayyads' naval capability. 'Abd al-Raḥmān II:

> made preparations to avoid a re-occurrence. He ordered the establishment of a shipyard in Seville and the construction of ships. He got together sailors from the coasts of al-Andalus and enlisted them and paid them well. He made ready engines (catapults, *ālāt*) and Greek fire. So when the Vikings came again, in the time of the emir Muḥammad (852–886), they were confronted at the mouth of the river of Seville and defeated, with some of their ships being burnt before they made off.
>
> (Ibn al-Qūṭīya *Tar'īkh*: 81, trans.: 101–102)

An Andalusi fleet may have been in existence before the arrival of the first Viking expedition (Lirola 1993: 82). The first clear reference to it is dated 848–849, when 'Abd al-Raḥmān II launched an expeditionary force of 300 against the Christians of Majorca and Minorca, who had recently been attacking Andalusi ships passing the islands (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [847–852]: 144). The earliest reference to a Muslim fleet that could have been active against Vikings comes in the *Chronicle of Albelda*, where the reference to Count Peter's expulsion of Vikings from Galicia in 859 was paired with the repulse of a fleet of Muslims (*Mauri*) who may have sailed into the Bay of Biscay (*Crónicas Asturianas*: 176). It is impossible to say whether these Muslims were freebooters from al-Andalus or the Maghreb, or a force sent from Cordoba. We have seen, however, that an Andalusi naval force contributed to the defeat of the 859–861 expedition. Arabic historians also referred to fleets in connection with Viking raids of the tenth century but there are, as always, problems of chronology and material corroboration. No archaeological trace of an early-medieval dockyard in Seville has yet been uncovered. A naval base was constructed in Almeria, but this was not until a Fatimid navy attacked the coast and sacked the town in 344/955–956 (Lirola 2005: 48–49). An inscription surviving from the dockyard appears to date to 343AH (954), although this reading is not certain (Barceló 2004: 183). Accounts of this naval base vary; some of the Arabic historians thought that it was at nearby Pechina (Lirola 1993: 137). The tenth century saw the Umayyads constructing coastal defences on both sides of the Mediterranean (Gurriarán 2004; Hita *et al.* 2008). These fortifications were built in response to the conflict between the Umayyads

and their Muslim rivals in the Maghreb, which was a greater threat to al-Andalus than sporadic pirate raids.

In Christian Iberia, several towns in the north-west had been fortified since the Roman period. Lugo had Roman walls a little over a kilometre long, of which there are massive remains. Lugo is a long way from the sea, although it lies on the river Miño where Vikings are known to have sailed. Al-Ḥimyarī may have been referring to Lugo in his description of *Aqsh* (perhaps *Lucus Augusti*): 'built of great rectangular stones on the banks of a great watercourse, which the *Majūs* went up in their ships to attack the region' (Al-Ḥimyārī *Rawḍ*: 169). In 968, the bishop of Lugo, Hermenegild asked his fellow-citizens for support to fortify the see against the *gens Lothomanorum*, whom he reviled as pagans (*servientes* and *paganos*), according to a charter that Flórez collected in the seventeenth century (ES vol.40: 403). At least two of the Asturian kings carried out defensive works against raiders coming by water. Ordoño I (850–866) fortified several towns, including Tuy on the Miño (Figure 5.2; *Crónicas Asturianas:* 144, n.105). Alfonso III (866–910) fortified Oviedo; an inscription in Oviedo Cathedral that commemorates this work seems to refer to the threat

Figure 5.2 River Miño at Tuy.

of depredations by pirates, although Vikings are not specified (*absit dum navali gentilitas pirato solent exercitu properare*).

The best evidence for defensive building against Vikings in the north comes from Santiago de Compostela (Galbán 2013). Walls and towers were built around the town to protect the shrine of the saint. The twelfth-century *Chronicon Iriense* dated some of this work to the episcopate of Sisnando II (952–968): 'In their incursions, Vikings (*Normanos ac Fradenses*) campaigned through Galicia. So that the body of the blessed Apostle should not fall into the hands of his enemies in a sudden attack . . . he [Sisnando] placed around the holy place, so that it was completely surrounded, defences, towers and deep ditches filled with water . . .' (ES vol.20: 604–605). Santiago's wall did not prevent al-Manṣūr's destruction of the town in 997 (Pérez de Urbel 1971). Another wall was built around the town during the episcopate of Cresconio (*c.* 1035–1066), who also added west towers to the cathedral (HC: 14) and in the twelfth century, archbishop Diego Gelmírez made further modifications to the walls. Excavations under the cathedral in 1946–1959 uncovered a wall and a tower, which may be part of the earliest phase of construction; unfortunately, the excavation report failed to clarify the relationship between these archaeological findings and the written sources (López 1988: 94, 246 and 249).

Sisnando II may also have ordered the construction of fortifications at A Lanzada, Pontevedra and Cedofeita, now a parish of Porto (López 1988: 225), although the work at A Lanzada was also associated with Diego Gelmírez (Fletcher 1984: 246; HC: 136). A Lanzada was already fortified. Donations were made to repair the fortifications early in the tenth century following attacks by Muslim pirates; excavations date parts of the fortifications to the ninth to eleventh centuries (Galbán 2013). Further south, the coast of present-day Portugal is dotted with fortresses, and although nearly all of the current buildings date from the Late Middle Ages, some could be earlier foundations. Sintra, situated at the point furthest west, Finisterre, served as a look-out point for Lisbon and places south. Al-Bakrī said it was one of the most important cities of western al-Andalus, with two fortresses (*ḥuṣn*; Al-Bakrī *Geography*: 63; Picard 2000: 214–215). At Sintra there is a fortification now called the Castelo dos Mouros (Castle of the Moors) that was probably in existence in the ninth century. Nearby, beyond a *ribāṭ* whose remains were recently identified, is a

place called Azóia – perhaps *al-Zāwiya* in Arabic, a place where one could meet holy men. Taking all these indications together – as perhaps one should not – a recent commentator suggested that these places all played a role in the defence of Lisbon against Vikings (Oliveira 2012). Local tradition, which a charter of donation helps to corroborate, associates the origins of the castle at Guimaraes, located above the river Ave, with the Viking Age. In a codicil to her testament of 959, added nine years later, the aristocrat Mumadona Dias, said, 'the persecution of the pagans (*Gentilium*) fell upon the city [of Guimaraes], and in fear of them, we built a *castellum* called San Mametis in this place' (PMH I: no. 76/959 and no. 97/968). Here the date suggests that these pagans might have been Vikings, although it is just as likely that the attackers were Muslims, coming either by land or by sea.

The most significant fortifications still extant from the period of Viking attacks on the peninsula stand at the estuary of the river Ulla below Santiago (Figure 5.3). Known today as the Torres del Oeste, the site was called *Honestum* in the medieval sources. Most of the written information comes from the

Figure 5.3 The Torres del Oeste.

Historia Compostellana and the prominence of the Torres in the history of Santiago may be explained by the fact that the father of Diego Gelmírez, who commissioned the *Historia*, served as lieutenant of *Honestum* (HC: 17). Bishop Cresconio constructed 'high towers and a solid wall' at *Honestum* in 1068 (HC: 14). The age of the surviving ruins, however, is disputed and they have been placed within a very wide time window; they may have been built in the tenth century, to replace a Roman construction (Galtier Martí 1991), or as late as the thirteenth century (Araguas 2005: 68–72). The written sources are a little more helpful. The first mention of *Honestum* is in a document from the council of Galician bishops of 1024 where Alfonso V called for a local levy for the restoration of the Torres (ES vol.20: 391). This antedates Cresconio's episcopate by at least ten years. Modern scholars have seen the building or restoration of *Honestum* as a response to Viking attempts to reach Santiago. Locals celebrate the defeat of Vikings here with a river pageant, known as the Romería, on the first Sunday in August (Figure 5.4). The nearby toponym of Camporamiro is

Figure 5.4 Replica Viking ships at Catoira, Ría de Arousa.

said to commemorate Ramiro's victory against Vikings in 844 (Sánchez Pardo 2010: 26). The *Historia Compostellana* is, in fact, much vaguer about the functions of *Honestum*. The chronicle recorded a number of different categories of pirates who threatened the coast at this period: the chronicler listed them as '*Anglici, Normanii* and other pagan peoples' (*Verebantur nimirium Hispani, ne Anglice uel Normamnigene siue alie barbare gentes ex haec parte navigio Galliciam aggrederuntur*; HC: 265–256). The chronicler also noted that Saracen pirates were active all along the northern coast as far as the Pyrenees (HC: 21). The year after Cresconio's work on Honestum was completed, the walls had to be strengthened after a Muslim attack. 'Pagans' was a catch-all category; the defences erected against the different varieties of pirates are almost as difficult to distinguish in the written sources as they are in the archaeology of these sites.

Up to the end of the ninth century, perhaps only Seville and the Guadalquivir basin in al-Andalus and Monastir and Sousse in the Maghreb had effective defences against pirates. But by the eleventh century, coastal defences spread along the coasts of Iberia and the Maghreb. Manning such defences may have been a religious duty. Yet, with a few exceptions, neither the fortifications nor the increase in naval preparedness can be linked specifically to Viking attacks. It seems that most of the new work was carried out at a time when Vikings do not seem to have troubled the peninsula. Iberia was not unprotected. Some cities had walls; watchtowers and more substantial fortifications from earlier periods might be pressed into service if an enemy appeared in the ocean, and a fleet might be launched against them. We will see in the next chapter how these defences were tested by raiders coming to Iberia from the north in the tenth century.

6

The Wars of Santiago and Cordoba against Vikings

The evidence for Vikings in Iberia in the tenth century covers less than a decade, during which Vikings raided the coasts of both Christian and Muslim Iberia and may briefly have settled in the peninsula. Only sketchy accounts of their activities survive. Yet as we saw in the collective memory of the campaign of 844, the mere presence of Vikings was enough to trigger the writing of grander narratives in both Christian and Muslim Iberia. For the tenth century, these narratives cluster around the Andalusi capital, Cordoba, and around Northern Iberia's growing cult centre at Santiago de Compostela. Both the clerics of Santiago and the court historians of Cordoba may have exaggerated the Viking threat in accordance with the writers' contemporary requirements for heroes and villains. Some plausible detail of Viking activity does emerge from these sources, as well as charters and local chronicles, and this will be evaluated. The main focus of this chapter, however, is an interrogation of the histories of Santiago and Cordoba, looking for evidence that Viking raiders posed a serious challenge either to the north or to the south of the peninsula.

A number of monasteries may have been destroyed by Vikings in the tenth century. The reality, depending as it does on charters of doubtful authenticity and on local traditions collected by antiquaries, however, is difficult to substantiate. Genuine charters from northern Iberia making claims for restitution after attacks by either Saracens or Vikings are rare until the eleventh to twelfth centuries, when ecclesiastical foundations squabbled over boundaries and appealed for donations (Barrett, forthcoming). Elsewhere in the Viking world, as in tenth-century Francia and England, tales of Viking atrocities were often a cover for depredations by locals. A charter from the monastery of San Juan de Coba, on the river Ulla, says it was 'reduced to nothing' by the attacks of *gentes Normannorum* (cited by Morales 2004: 192).

Some twenty years later, *c.* 995, the monastery of Santa Eulalia de Curtis was restored after Viking attacks. The charter of restoration notes that: 'Vikings (*gentes Lotimanorum*) came to this land because of the sins of the people and devastated the church and its neighbours (*convicinas*); the priests were carried away captive and were put to the sword and the church and its books were consumed by fire until not even a burned stone remained' (Sobrado *c.* 995: no.137). In 1905, Manuel Formoso, who excavated at the Torres del Oeste, listed a number of sites in northern Iberia that Vikings may have ravaged: he named Chantada, in the province of Lugo; Merlan, two kilometres away; Castro-Candada; and Castro de San Sebastián (Formoso 1905: 58 and 77). According to Formoso, the descendants of the inhabitants of Chantada remembered that Ramiro I and Alfonso III had granted them privileges for their actions against Vikings. No surviving document or chronicle recorded raids on Chantada. Formoso may have relied on oral reports collected by eighteenth-century historians, but he spoiled his case by describing in some detail a battle between Ramiro and the Viking attackers in 844 (Menéndez 2007: 144, n.55). It is only with the greatest scepticism, therefore, that Formoso's information can be added to the dossier on Vikings in Iberia.

It may, however, have been in the 960s that the see of Tuy was abandoned after a Viking raid. The details come from the charter of Alfonso V of 1024 uniting the see of Tuy with Santiago:

> As the ancients relate, we know all Hispania to have been possessed by the Christians, and governed under one province of the Church, see and bishop. A short time after this, as sinfulness flourished, the coast was ravaged by Vikings (*gens Leodomanorum*); and since among the sees that of Tuy was the last and most recent, the bishop there residing was made prisoner with all his flock by the enemy, who killed or sold the inhabitants and reduced the town to nothing, so that for many years it lay destitute and mournful. After this, by the mercy of God who rules all and disposes everything for the best, we broke the necks of many of the enemy and drove them from our kingdom, with God's aid. A long time afterwards . . . we judged it necessary to join it to the Apostolic see, as we do by this act.
>
> (Santiago cathedral: 152–154)

The town of Tuy was vulnerable to attack by sea and land. It fell to the Muslims soon after the conquest of 711, but was retaken by Ordoño I in 854. A document

of unknown origin, dated to 1112, records a tenth-century bishop of Tuy called Naustio, who exchanged a villa with Alfonso IV (925–930) (ES vol.22: 250–253). The scribe noted that Tuy was on the river Miño 'which Saracens and Vikings (*Normanni*) were used to enter'. It seems unlikely that pirates had caused lasting devastation on the Miño before the 960s, since the nearby monastery of Castrelo on the Miño was functioning in 966, when Sancho I of Leon died there (*Historia Silense*: 170). There seems, however, to be a gap in the list of bishops of Tuy after Viliulfus, appointed in 960 (Prudencio de Sandoval 1610: 49), which might be attributable to pirate incursions. Dozy dated the Vikings' destruction of Tuy much later, to 1008 (Dozy 1881, II: 300; Chapter 7). In the charter of 1024 the clerics of Santiago were clearly trying to make the destruction of Tuy a distant event, in the mists of time which only the ancients remembered. This seems a risky strategy if Tuy's collapse was within living memory – although the clerics of Santiago had little compunction about rewriting recent history as we shall see.

Two more documents may also be referring to the Viking raids on northern Iberia in the second half of the tenth century. The first is a charter of donation to the monastery of San Martin Pinario in Santiago, dated 2 January 966. Only a fragment remains, but a summary of the document copied into a much later manuscript reports a donation made to the monastery by Ordonio Laurencio with his wife Ayleuva and children of their property in villa Campania, delimited by, *inter alia*, the Louro, Cordeiro and Valga, up to where there was 'the city of the Vikings (*Loclimanos*)' (San Martin Pinario 966: no.8). A charter of Sobrado de los Monjes, A Coruña, dated 992, uses a period of Viking raiding or perhaps even a more permanent Viking presence in Galicia, as a marker of time; in the course of a dispute settlement, a tenant claims to have rendered obedience and service to the son of his former lord 'up to the days of Vikings (*Lormanorum*)' (Sobrado 992: no.130). Both the charters could equally well, however, have been referring back to Viking activities of the ninth century.

In order to relate the charters to dated narratives, it is necessary to resort to Dudo of St-Quentin – not, as we have seen, the most reliable witness. On this occasion, Dudo supplies a plausible, if over-dramatized summary of raids on northern Iberia in 964–966. A group of Scandinavian pirates had been devastating Francia for five years. Duke Richard of Normandy employed

them as mercenaries in his struggles against the count of Chartres and king Lothar of Francia. The campaign over, and echoing the process by which his ancestors had established themselves on the continent, he tried to persuade them to convert to Christianity and settle in Normandy, but some of them refused.

> The magnificent and pious duke . . . made the most fearfully ferocious Northmen appear before him. And he said to them: '. . . Upon you, I will bestow land grants, and I will cause you to be reborn at the holy font. To these men I will grant provisions for the sea-voyage, with ships laden with meal and bacon . . . And those who desired to wander in the ways of paganism, he had them guided to Spain by guides from Coutances. And in the course of that voyage they captured eighteen cities, and won for themselves what they found in them. Raiding here and there, they attacked Spain, and began afflicting it severely with burning and plundering.
>
> (Dudo *De moribus*: 287: trans.: 162)

An army of peasants drove away the Northmen 'after there had been a terrible slaughter'. Dudo could not resist an ethnographic addendum to this story, a vague memory that the peoples of Iberia were not like those of Normandy or Scandinavia:

> And on the third day, the Northmen went back to the field of battle, and when they were turning over the dead to rob them of their clothing, they found the parts of the bodies of the dusky ones and the Ethiopians lying next to the ground to be whiter than snow; but they noticed that the rest of the body had kept the original colour.

In an account composed closer to the scene of battle, it was not the peasants, but the bishops of Santiago who repelled the marauders – in their own version of events, at least. They may have acted out of necessity, since the king, Ramiro III (966–985) was a minor, but they were following a general trend. Elsewhere in western Europe, the threat of Viking attacks was the main impetus to the militarization of the clergy (Prinz 1971: 124). The clergy of northern Iberia had an even more importunate enemy – the most devastating single raid on the north in the tenth century was al-Manṣūr's attack on Santiago in 997 – but the war against Vikings was also of great concern. The history of Santiago is bedevilled by forged charters and creative histories. Most

of the evidence for Santiago comes from cartularies and chronicles composed in the twelfth century, which make retrospective claims for the status and antiquity of the cult site (Fletcher 1984: 9, 68–81; Collins 2012: 114–116). The most extensive and laudatory of all these sources was the *Historia Compostellana*, commissioned by Diego Gelmírez. As we saw in the last chapter, the *Historia Compostellana* remembered bishop Sisnando II (952–968) as building Santiago's defences against Vikings. A forged charter showed Sisnando II granting land to *milites* who had defended Santiago when the shrine was beset by 'barbarians' (*barbari*) who may have been Vikings (López Alsina 1988: 227). The picture of Sisnando that emerges from the sources, however, equivocates. Sisnando was condemned for the tyranny which he exercised to benefit his own palaces and foundations and for running down the church's patrimony. For this reason, Sancho I of Leon (955–957 and 960–966) imprisoned Sisnando and gave his office to Rosendo, the former bishop of Mondoñedo, and founder of the monastery at Celanova (HC: 12). After the king's death, Sisnando escaped from prison and drove Rosendo out of Santiago by force. The context in which this episode was recalled was two-fold. One was the beatification of Rosendo, to which we shall return. The other was the efforts to establish norms of ecclesiastical life, including the Peace of God, the duration of which was laid down by a council in Compostela in 1124. According to the authors of the *Historia Compostellana*, who were heedless of the fact that these norms were not in force in the tenth century, Sisnando violated the Peace of God by entering the church of Santiago on Christmas Eve with a band of armed men. He found Rosendo asleep there, surrounded by the other clerics, in conformity with the requirement of the Councils of Compostela 1056 and of Rome 1059 for clergy to live in common. Cursing Sisnando, Rosendo left for his monastery of Celanova. Later, Sisnando met a violent death at the hands of Vikings.

Sisnando's fateful meeting with Vikings was also recounted in the eleventh-century *Chronicle of Sampiro*. The *Chronicle* survives in three twelfth-century compilations: the *Historia Silense*, the *Liber chronicorum* of Pelayo of Oviedo and *Chronica Naierense*. All these versions may have been interpolated, the *Silense* version perhaps least so:

> In the second year of his reign (Ramiro III, i.e. 968) one hundred ships of Vikings (*Normani*) with their king Gundered penetrated the cities of

> Galicia and with much slaughter in the lands of Santiago, whose bishop Sisnando perished by the sword. They sacked all Galicia as far as the *Pirineos montes Ezebrarii*. In the third year of their settlement, God, from whom nothing is hidden, brought down his vengeance upon them; for just as they had carried the Christians away captive and put many to the sword, so many ills fell upon them, until they were forced to go out from Galicia. Count Guillelmus Sánchez, in the name of the Lord, and with the aid of the Apostle Santiago whose lands they had devastated, went out with a great army and with divine aid killed all the pagans, including their king, and burned their ships.
>
> (*Historia Silense*: 171)

Apart from Sisnando, none of the people and places named in this passage can be identified with certainty. Gundered could be one of the two sons of Harald Finehair with this name (*Heimskringla*: 21 and 25) although neither is known to have gone to Spain. The *Pirineos montes Ezebrarii* has been identified the Montes del Cebrero, in the Vega de Valcarce, where El Bierzo is the site of the customs post (*portazgo*) between Galicia and Leon and lies on the camino de Santiago – although it is not in the Pyrenees, nor is it obviously accessible by boat. Guillelmus Sanchez could be one of two figures: the obscure Gonzalo Sanchez who was held responsible for the death of king Sancho I of Leon at Castrelo in 966 (*Historia Silense*: 170), or William II Sanchez of Gascony (*c.* 961–*c.* 996), although the latter is not known to have been active in Galicia. The *Historia Compostellana* emphasized that divine justice had condemned Sisnando to die: 'when Vikings (*Normani*), leaving the port of Junqueras, headed for Iria, sacking these regions, Sisnando left the city and, surrounded by his army, pursued them ... to a meadow called Fornelos where, in a violent offensive, he was wounded by an arrow, as the curse of the blessed Rosendo had predicted' (HC: 13). Junqueras may be present-day Bacariza, a village on the left bank of the Ulla, not far from the Torres del Oeste. Fornelos lies to the south of the Ulla and twenty-five kilometres south-east of Santiago. The *Chronicon Iriense* recorded an essentially similar version of these events. Sisnando, hearing that Vikings (*Normani ac Frandenses*) coming from Junqueras were approaching Iria 'capturing the men and women whom they encountered on the way, devastating and sacking the countryside' went out to meet them. But Sisnando, 'puffed up with pride', was justly killed by Vikings at Fornelos (ES vol.20: 606; Isla 1984).

When Ordoño of Celanova was rewriting the *Life* of Rosendo in preparation for his canonization in 1192, he listed among the saint's miracles the victories that Rosendo had achieved against both Muslims and Vikings:

> At the time when Blessed Rosendo ruled the church of Iriense, as it is asserted, when almost all Galicia was invaded by a multitude of Normans and the province of Portugal was devastated by the strength of the Saracens and the above-mentioned King Sancho was continually detained in the regions of Toledo by the ravaging of vineyards and crops and the expulsion of the enemy from the Christian borders, Bishop Rosendo . . . with the mercy of God . . . freed the fatherland of Portugal from the perfidy of the pagans and rendered Galicia safe from the arrogance of the Gauls.
>
> (Ordoño de Celanova: 130–132, trans.: Smith 2009: 60, n.52)

There is no evidence that any of the details in the *Life* are earlier than the twelfth century. Six codices preserve all or part of the text, and one of these may have been copied for Celanova. There is also a variant version in a codex from Alcobaça, whose first six chapters recount Rosendo's time in Iria, and above all, the violent confrontation with Sisnando, in terms similar to those used in the *Chronicon Iriense*; this version could, however, have been redacted as late as the sixteenth century (Ordoño de Celanova: 280–289). In the *Life*, Ordoño seemed to have been thinking about Normans in Normandy, rather than Scandinavians of the tenth century, and about Portugal, which did not yet exist in Rosendo's time. The *Life* is also concerned with the present-day predicament of Celanova; as well as the biography and miracles, the hagiographer listed royal donations and privileges and donations to the monastery by Rosendo's family. Rosendo was portrayed as recommending the Benedictine Rule, which was not introduced at Celanova until the twelfth century (Herbers 2006). The papal legate to Spain, cardinal Hyacinth, later Celestine III, underlined the significance of Rosendo's victory over Vikings in his letter of canonization (Smith 2009). It became a significant feature of the saint's cult, which was celebrated as far away as Rome. A painting given to the cathedral of Ourense for the millennial celebrations of Rosendo's birth shows the bishop standing in front of a sword and two horned helmets (González García 2007). Rosendo is well-documented as a bishop with royal connections, and a monastic founder active in religious reform (Saez 1946). Although his monastery of Celanova lies near Ourense, which was linked to navigable

reaches of the river Miño, it does not seem to have attracted the attention of pirates. None of Rosendo's charters suggest that he had a military role against Vikings, although we might postulate an undocumented episode, perhaps from his time as bishop of Mondoñedo.

Vikings became a thread running through ecclesiastical memory. Bishop Cresconio, who was associated with the fortifications at Torres del Oeste, acted at the council of Coyanza of 1055 to allow exemption from the day of rest on Sunday in the case of an incursion of Vikings (*Lormanorum*) or a Saracen attack (Council of Coyanza cited in Deswarte 2003: 178). The deposition of bishop Diego Peláez of Santiago a generation later at the Council of Husillos of 1088 was justified by his supposed collaboration with Vikings, perhaps a disparaging reference to William I of Normandy and England (Fletcher 1984: 32; López Alsina 1988: 110). On the other hand, Vikings provided the opportunity for a bishop named Gonzalvo to demonstrate his sanctity; according to a local legend, at the appearance of a Viking fleet he began to pray, and with every Ave Maria a Viking ship sank or caught fire (Huerta y Vega 1733, vol.2: 836). Sadly, this story seems to have been recorded for the first time only in the sixteenth century, when Philip III of Spain (1598–1621) ordered the building of a hermitage decorated with a picture of the miracle, near to the church of San Martin in Mondoñedo. Flórez, with appropriate scepticism, cited Prudencio de Sandoval as the source for his retelling of the story (ES vol.18: 288–291). Neither the date nor the location of this miracle can be pinpointed. No bishop named Gonzalvo was recorded in the Viking period and the evidence for the see, Dumio, north of Braga, with which he is associated in the legend, is problematic. Sometime after the conquest of 711, the see of Dumio was subsumed into that of Mondoñedo, but the bishops continued to be known under both titles (Fletcher 1984: 27). Gonzalvo could have been the incumbent during the apparent gap in the list of bishops of Mondoñedo between Rosendo's move from that see to Santiago in the 960s and the accession of Theodimir (?–977). Alternatively, the story may have become attached to a later bishop of Mondoñedo called Gonzalo (1070–1112). It showed that repulsing Vikings was one of the things that good bishops were supposed to do.

It is possible that Vikings went on to raid al-Andalus from their bases in Galicia. Ibn Idhārī gave a plain account of their appearance off the coast in 966

and subsequent defeat, citing 'Arīb ibn Sa'īd who, as the caliph's secretary, may have read the letters to which the following extract refers.

> On June 23, 966 al-Hakam II received a letter from Alcacer do Sal. It told that a fleet of Vikings (*Majūs*) had been seen in western seas near this place, that the inhabitants of all the coast were greatly anxious, as they knew that Vikings used formerly to make raids into Spain, and finally that the fleet consisted of twenty-eight ships. Thereupon other letters with news of Vikings came from these coasts; they told among other things that Vikings had plundered here and there, and had arrived at the plain of Lisbon. Muslims then went against them, and gave them battle, in which many of our men died as martyrs, but several heathen (*Mushrikīn*) found their death there, too. Then the Muslim fleet came out of the Seville harbour (the mouth of the Guadalquivir) and attacked a Viking fleet in the river at Silves. Our men put out of action several hostile ships, freed the Muslim prisoners on board, killed a great multitude of the heathen, and put the others to flight. After this, news arrived every moment at Cordoba from the west coast of the movements of Vikings, until God sent them away . . .
>
> (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 238–239, trans.: Stefánsson: 42–43)

Al-Ḥakam commanded his admiral Ibn Fuṭaīs to build imitation Viking ships on the Guadalquivir 'as a trick for [the *Majūs*] to fall into'; Ibn Idhārī implied that the stratagem was successful in drawing Vikings into an ambush.

Five years later, at the beginning of Ramadan (1 July 971) another group of Vikings appeared: 'the news reached Cordoba that Vikings (*Majūs al-ardumāniyīn*) –whom God curse! – had been seen on the sea and intended, as was their custom, to attack the western coast of Andalus. The Sultan then commanded his admiral to hurry to Almeria, take the fleet there to Seville and collect all the other squadrons in the west' (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 241, trans.: Stefánsson: 44). Ibn Idhārī did not record what happened next. This is unfortunate because of the lacunae in our other main source, the *Muqtabas* of Ibn Ḥayyān. For the whole of the tenth century after the end of the reign of 'Abd Allāh (888–912), the surviving text of the *Muqtabas* covers a mere five years of the reign of al-Ḥakam II, from 360–364 (971–974) (*Muqtabas* [971–974]); the manuscript was discovered and copied in Constantine, Algeria, in the nineteenth century but the original subsequently disappeared. The narrative is dominated by information about the court at Cordoba and

Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, including tedious enumerations of court appointments, elaborate descriptions of the celebrations of the major religious feasts and the reception of new allies (Barceló 1991); it was translated into Spanish with the title *Anales palatinos*. This section of the *Muqtabas* includes accounts of Viking attacks on al-Andalus during 971 and 972. The latter date is the one that Ibn Idhārī gave for the second raid he mentioned. Ibn Khaldūn also made a brief reference to Viking attacks on the area around Lisbon in 971, noting that by the time that the admiral had mobilized the Andalusi fleet, locals had already driven off the marauders (Ibn Khaldūn, *ʿIbār* IV: 314). A memory of this episode was thus common to a number of sources, although the way it was recorded varied greatly.

Ibn Ḥayyān's account of 971 and 972 is the most detailed narrative of the whole Viking dossier, and is only summarized here (Christys, forthcoming). It is also curious. Perhaps for both these reasons, earlier commentators on Vikings in the South barely mentioned it. It does not seem to have been constructed as a whole, but is distributed annalistically through a narrative of events in Cordoba. It is, however, impossible to be sure that we are following the thread of this episode as Ibn Ḥayyān intended, because the folia of the manuscript appear to be in disorder; García Gómez chose a different order for his translation. The narrative opens at the beginning of Ramadan, 360 (the end of June 971). The caliph al-Ḥakam II, who was at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, outside Cordoba (Figure 6.1), received the news that *Majūs* had appeared in the northern ocean and were heading for the west coast of al-Andalus. The caliph sent for his admiral, Ibn Rumāhis, who was in the city, where he held the office of chief of police and ordered him to embark the fleet at Almeria and sail in the direction of the Algarve. On 3 July, Ibn Rumāhis departed. Al-Ḥakam summoned his wazīr, Ghālib, who was also in Cordoba:

> and he had a private conference with him, in which he spoke of the unexpected news he had received of the enemy who was most to be feared, and of his purpose in sending Ghālib after them and of directing a campaign against them, imminently, the very same year, whose control and preparation he would confer on Ghālib, both by sea and land, as he knew very well his capacity, zeal, intelligence, penetration and adequacy for the task.
>
> (Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabas* [971–975]: 24, trans.: 48)

Figure 6.1 Madīnat al-Zahrā'.

Ghālib did not leave until 12 July, nine days after his meeting with the caliph in a ceremonial departure from the Eastern Gate of Madīnat al-Zahrā' (Figure 6.2) that Ibn Ḥayyān recorded in great detail (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [971–975]: 25–26, trans.: 48–49). On 22 July an ambassador arrived from Astorga with the news that two weeks earlier, Vikings (*Majūs*) had sailed up the river Duero to *Shantabarīya*, although they left with nothing (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [971–975]: 27, trans.: 50). This toponym has been identified as Santaver, one of the administrative divisions of the caliphate to the north-east of Madrid; although accessible via the Duero, it is a long way inland. There may be confusion with *Shantarīn* (Santarem, on the river Tagus above Lisbon), which Ibn Ḥayyān mentioned in connection with a later phase of Viking activity. None of the Latin sources mentioned the embassy or dated a Viking expedition to this year. Two sets of annals, however, may be alluding to this campaign. Both the second collection of the *Anales Complutenses* and the first group of the *Anales Toledanos*, noting the capture of a count of Castile in 970, added that: 'Vikings (*Lordomani*) came to Campos' (ES vol.20: 311;

Figure 6.2 The Eastern Gate, Madīnat al-Zahrā'.

ES vol.30: 382). Campos may refer either to Santiago or to the Campos Goticos in the province of Leon. The *Anales Complutenses* and *Toledanos* are among a number of short chronicles that Flórez published in the eighteenth century. They mix history and myth and often seem, as here, to be copying from each other. Since most of them have still to be re-edited or studied, it is difficult to assess the value of this reference to *Lordomani* (EMC I: 92–93).

During the week of the embassy, two of al-Ḥakam's court officials travelled through the south west requisitioning supplies for the fleet. It was not until the end of Ramadān, about 25 July, that the fleet set sail from Almeria (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [971–975]: 27–28). Nearly a month later, the caliph heard that the fleet had returned to port without finding any Vikings:

> Vikings (*Majūs*) had certainly known that the caliph was hurrying to confront them; that he had taken steps against them; that he had sent his military chief-of-staff, the judge and wazir Ghālib ibn ʻAbd al-Raḥmān, who had already set out to meet them; that the admirals were also on their trail, with squadrons of ships; and that, in short, admirable armies and powerful

> fleets had been mobilized against them. Hearing of the one and of the other, Vikings did not feel the slightest inclination to face up to them, nor to fan out along the coasts where their presence had been noticed, but to flee as fugitives, frustrated in their hope of taking booty from the Muslims.
>
> (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [971–975]: 58, trans.: 76–77)

The raiders being conclusively despatched, the narrative shifts to other events. Then, unexpectedly, there is a description of a triumph staged for Ghālib on his return to Cordoba, even though he too had failed to engage with a single Viking. A military detachment, decorated with banners and standards, escorted the victor into the Alcazar, the Umayyad palace within the walls of Cordoba, where Ghālib's exploits were celebrated in a panegyric and the caliph showered him with gifts.

The following year, on 20 June 972, al-Ḥakam II again summoned members of his immediate circle to a private council with the aim of mounting an expedition against Vikings (*Majūs al-ardumāniyīn*), who were a constant threat to the coasts of the Algarve (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [971–975]: 78, trans.: 101). This time the leaders of the forces were Ziyād ibn Aflah, master of the caliph's stables and inspector of the guards, and Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn Uthmān, the chief of police. Once again, although recounted in less detail than the previous episode, the caliph expressed the greatest confidence in his intimates; even before they had set off, he awarded them precious garments, magnificent turbans, jewelled swords and a splendid pavilion in which they could hold councils of war. Once again, there was a ceremonial departure of the army, arrayed with banners. So many people turned out to see them depart, from the nobility to the most humble, said the chronicler, that even God could not count them. It was not until 17 September that the two leaders returned to Cordoba, only to report that their quarry had once again escaped them. Arriving at Santarem, the Andalusis heard that the *Majūs* had fled at the news of their approach; spies who were sent up the coast as far as Santiago confirmed that there was absolutely no sign of any Vikings.

Ibn Ḥayyān's accounts of the arrival of Vikings in 971–972 are different from the accounts he preserved of raids on al-Andalus in the previous century, which recorded where Vikings landed, how many they were, what damage was done, who fought against them, and the location of the Andalusi victories. In one way, Ibn Ḥayyān's report on the events of the 970s may reflect

something of the reality of Viking attacks on the coasts of al-Andalus in the tenth century; they were lightning raids which were over long before the authorities could mount a response, perhaps repulsed by local militia, as Ibn Khaldūn had recorded. Yet the attention given to the preparations to meet the *Majūs* and to the reception awarded to the Cordoban commanders on their return, even though the quarry had escaped, is remarkable. During the same period, the Umayyad generals departed for their annual summer expeditions against the Christian north with little ceremonial. Ghālib's many encounters with the Christians of northern Iberia were recorded only briefly (Ibn Idhārī *Bayān*, vol.2: 213 and *passim*; Meouak 1990). Only occasionally were Cordoba's struggles against her adversaries commemorated in ceremonial comparable to that mounted to celebrate Ghālib's imaginary victories over Vikings. Recounting a campaign of June–September 972 against a Berber rebel in Morocco, Ibn Ḥayyān described in detail the preparations for departure. This focus seems to be justified by the subsequent achievements of the caliph's forces – whose leaders included Ziyād ibn Aflah, who was supposedly looking for Vikings during the same summer (Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [971–975]: 78, trans.: 102–104; Ibn Ḥayyān *Muqtabas* [971–975]: 90–91; trans.: 110–114). If Ibn Ḥayyān's account of the Viking episode, however embellished, is a memory of actual events, it seems that the author, or his patron al-Ḥakam II, was talking up the threat posed by the Vikings for domestic political purposes. Like the Alamanns on the frontier of the Roman empire (Drinkwater 2007), the presence of Vikings off the western coast of al-Andalus justified the caliph's keeping his army on alert and his commanders jockeying for favour. The ceremonial viewed from the caliph's palaces in Cordoba and at Madīnat al-Zahrā' was a record of who was in and who was out, taken to parodic extremes; the royal favourites departed, horses caparisoned and banners flying, and returned in the same state of caliphal preferment without any blood having being spilt.

After a long gap during which either no Vikings arrived, or other events monopolized the attention of historians, both Muslim and Christian authors turned to Vikings again in their accounts of the 960s and 970s. Lying behind these stories and retrospective monastic claims for damages are genuine Viking attacks. They were locally disruptive, but most likely sporadic; it is difficult to argue that Vikings were a significant threat to the peace of Iberia in the tenth

century. Historians set up Vikings as cardboard cut-out villains to be knocked down by their heroes. In the North, the clerics of Santiago characterized them as bogeymen who tested the moral fibre of their bishops. In al-Andalus, in contrast, Ibn Ḥayyān insisted that simply the knowledge that Umayyad generals would arrive at some point in the future was enough to frighten off the *Majūs*. In Francia, northern Iberia and al-Andalus there were audiences for these stories. It is not clear that Dudo's *Deeds of the Normans* pleased the dukes of Normandy who commissioned it, but later generations added to the tale; for the clerics of Santiago the *Historia Compostellana* was their official version of the past; Ibn Ḥayyān's compilation earned him the soubriquet 'the Historian'. The accounts of Viking attacks with which these authors entertained their listeners should not prompt a revision of the general narrative of the Viking Age. The deeds of Vikings in the South in the tenth century were rewritten as drama that was not of their own making.

7

Conclusion: From Charter and Chronicle to Saga

Viking activity in the South was recorded many times and in many different contexts. The most significant raids – on Galicia and Seville in 845 and 859–861 and the voyage to the Mediterranean – became part of the history of Iberia in its various manifestations in chronicles, hagiography and sagas, as well as in geographies and charters. Yet the detail has been difficult to pin down. It has often proved impossible to confirm the places and dates of Viking raids, to document the effect of these raids on local communities, or to evaluate the role played in deterring Viking raids by the physical defences and fleets that were constructed in this period. The more detailed the stories of Vikings are, the less we are inclined to believe them. This is especially true where the sources are late and seem to be embellishing the plain statements of earlier chroniclers. Leaving aside the Arabic historians' accounts of battles that mobilized the full forces of the Umayyads, we can conclude that Viking activity in the South was probably small-scale, although perhaps more frequent than our sources admit. This emerges most strongly in evidence for raids on northern Iberia in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Against the argument that these could not be real Vikings now that Scandinavia had been Christianized, the evidence of Iberian charters and chronicles attest that raiders from the sea were still being labelled and characterized in the same way. The peninsular sources for this period are few and laconic; there are no substantial narratives in either the Latin or the Arabic sources. Now the locus of storytelling about Vikings in the South has shifted to Scandinavia and Iceland. Although Norse seafarers may no longer have been sailing on long voyages to trade and plunder, Iberia attracted the attention of the saga-writers, whose stories transformed Vikings who sailed to the peninsula from pirates into epic heroes. It is difficult to know how much attention to give to these stories, but the sagas of Scandinavians

who sailed to Iberia and beyond cannot be completely divorced from the events that gave rise to them (Clunies Ross 2010: 17). This chapter will counterpose the quotidian reality of piracy as it is revealed in the charters and chronicles of northern Iberia with the elaborations of the sagas. The disjunction encapsulates the relationship between the reality and the recreation of Viking expeditions to the South.

In 1015 Amarelo Mestaliz incurred a debt in ransoming his daughters. He was obliged to sell part of his land near the monastery of San Salvador de Moreira, in the north of modern-day Portugal and a little way from the sea. In the charter of sale, Amarelo says: 'A great number of Vikings (*Lotnimis*) arrived in July and occupied the territory between the rivers Douro and Ave for nine months. These Vikings (*Leodemanes*) captured my three daughters, called Serili, Ermesenda and Faquilo, and reduced me to poverty, for, when they were about to sell their captives, I had no choice but to pay to Vikings (*Lotmanes*) a ransom of silver for them.' The charter survived in a seventeenth-century copy of the cartulary of San Salvador (Coimbra: codex 194 f.200v; Pinto de Azavedo 1974: 85). A few years later, a woman called Meitilli from Pedroso, perhaps just south of Porto, sold some of her property to repay the ransom that was handed over to liberate her and her daughter from a Viking ship (*barca de Laudomanes*). This time no silver changed hands; the raiders accepted a cloak, a sword, a shirt, three pieces of linen, a cow and some salt, to a value of 70 *modios* (PMH, 3, I: no.261, 161). It is impossible to say how much this was worth. References to silver or to value in terms of silver or *modios* are ambiguous, especially as the term *modius* was used to refer both to a quantity and a value (Davies 2002). But this sounds like a relatively small amount; a charter from San Millan of 986 records a ransom of 150 *solidi argenti* paid to ransom a captive taken by Muslims (cited in Davies 2002). A charter dated 1028 from Oviedo refers to a certain Felix who had fallen into royal disfavour, fleeing to sea in 'Viking ships' (*barcas de Lodomanos*). When he was able to return Felix received an estate from Queen Velasquita (San Vicente de Oviedo: no.30). This charter may not be genuine, but the writer believed that such collaboration with pirates was plausible. This handful of charters detailing relations between individuals are perhaps the best evidence we have for the real impact of Vikings in Iberia. It is frustrating that they are so few and that they survive only from the very late tenth and early eleventh centuries, often copied into cartularies at a

much later date. Yet the charters show what we might have suspected from reading of accounts of earlier Viking raids in the histories, that they were small-scale and of limited significance except for the individuals and communities affected.

Two consecutive entries in the *Chronicon Lusitanum* seem to concern Vikings. The chronicle, which begins with the arrival of the Goths in Spain and ends in 1184, was composed in the twelfth century, mainly to commemorate the reign of Afonso Henriques, the first ruler of independent Portugal (Sánchez Alonso 1941: 94). Most of the entries are very brief, and there is no reference to Viking campaigns of the ninth and tenth centuries. For 1008, the chronicler noted the death of Menendo Gonzalez, who owned lands along the Douro and held the lordship of Tuy, which may have been destroyed by Vikings about this time (ES vol.14: 417; David 1947: 295; Dozy 1881, vol.2: 300; but see Chapter 6). The most powerful member of the Galician aristocracy, Menendo was regent for Alfonso V from 1003 until his right to the role was challenged by the king's uncle; the dispute went to arbitration in Cordoba but Menendo was killed shortly afterwards in unknown circumstances (Collins 2012: 163). It was almost certainly a violent death; Ibn Khaldūn noted that Menendo was assassinated (cited in Dozy 1881, vol.1: 102). A few years later, Vikings were again in the area; the following entry in the *Chronicon Lusitanum* noted that in 1016: 'on 6 September, Vikings (*Lormanes*) came to the Castle of Vermudo in the province of Braga' (ES vol.14: 417). This could be the castillo of Labio, which Vermudo II (982/4–999) gave to Count Vermudo Vegilaz, according to a letter that will be discussed shortly. Dozy suggested that, since Menendo's family returned to royal favour – his daughter later married Alfonso V (999–1028) – the role of the local nobility in his murder may have been suppressed and attributed to Vikings rather than to local political difficulties (Dozy 1881, vol.1: 102).

This was the period when Scandinavians from Normandy, some of them travelling as pilgrims, conquered southern Italy and Sicily. Others took part in the attack on Muslim Barbastro in 1064. Young men of high standing from Scandinavia travelled in search of adventure before they settled down; in the final phase of Viking raiding, some of the leaders of these expeditions were kings (Samson 1991: 126). There are several references to such men in Iberia, both in brief histories of Norway, dating to the turn of the twelfth–thirteenth

centuries, and in kings' sagas, written in Norway, or in a Norwegian-influenced milieu under the influence of the Latin literacy of Europe (Clunies Ross 2010: 30). Two of these sources, *Ágrip*, a synoptic history of the kings of Norway, and the Latin *History of Norway*, both composed towards the end of the twelfth century, noted that Erik Bloodaxe (d.*c.* 950) perished during a campaign in Iberia.

> And it happened then that when Erik Bloodaxe fled the country he went west with his ships to England and there spent his time raiding and plundering. There he asked quarter of the English king, as Æthelstan had promised him. He received from the king an earldom in Northumbria. Through the advice of his wife Gunnhildr he became once again so cruel and savage in his dealings with his people that they could scarcely endure it. Because of this he went raiding and harrying widely in western Europe and fell in Spain while on a raid.
>
> (*Ágrip*: trans.: 17; *History of Norway*: trans.: 15; Clunies Ross 2010: 22)

Only *Ágrip* and the *History of Norway* place Erik's death in Spain (*Ágrip:* trans.: 17; *History of Norway:* trans.: 15). Other Scandinavian historians say he died with five other Norse kings on Stainmoor in Westmoreland (*Ágrip*: trans.: 17, n.32). Around the same date, according to the *Knýtlinga Saga*, Ulf, 'a count of Denmark and a great warrior . . . went on a Viking expedition to the West and conquered Galicia, which he scorched and sacked, obtaining great booty; for this reason he was known as Ulf the Galician' (cited in Morales 2004: 208). Some ten years later, a group from the '*gens Leodomanorum*' served as mercenaries in the course of a revolt by count Rodrigo Romaniz against Vermudo III of León (1028–1037) in the area around Lugo; they are mentioned in a letter of 1032 attributed to the king, but it is difficult to be sure from the letter whose side the Vikings were on (*Colección diplomática*: 70–71). Pérez de Urbel appended the name of Ulf to this episode (HE vol.6: 181), although there is no reason other than a coincidence in the dates to think that Ulf played any role in the upheavals of Vermudo's reign. This is a good example of the sort of 'facts' about Vikings that have been transmitted from one secondary source to another in modern times.

The Christianization of Scandinavia provided a new focus for the saga-writers, whose principal heroes were Olaf Tryggvason (995–1000), who helped bring Christianity to Norway, and Olaf Haraldsson/St. Olaf (1015–1030), who

consolidated the Norwegian church. Both were said to have travelled on pilgrimage or crusade to Jerusalem, perhaps via Iberia and the Mediterranean. It is most unlikely that Olaf Tryggvason ever passed this way; he disappeared during a sea battle *c.* 1000, and although rumours were soon abroad that he had leaped into the sea and survived, it was only in the twelfth century, the age of the Crusades, that his links with Christianization generated the legend that he had sailed to Jerusalem:

> Of the fall of King Olaf nothing was known. It was seen that as the fighting lessened he stood, still alive, on the high-deck astern on the Long Serpent, which had thirty- two rowing-places. But when Erik went to the stern of the ship in search of the king, a light flashed before him, as though it were lightning, and when the light disappeared, the king himself was gone. Some suppose he got away in a boat and say that he was seen afterwards in a monastery in the Holy Land, but others think that he fell overboard.
>
> (*Ágrip*: trans.: 34–35; Cohen 1995; Vesteinn 1998: 49; Phelpstead 2007: 34 and n.147)

The main exploits of Vikings in Iberia in the eleventh century gathered around the name of Olaf Haraldsson. A poem by Sigvat Thordarson, the *Vikingavísur* (Fell 1981), listed his early battles, including three in Iberia. It may have been written shortly after Olaf's death but survives only in a thirteenth-century manuscript of the *Heimskringla* of Snorri Sturluson; *Fagrskinna*, which is earlier, has only fragments (see below). The historical value of *Vikingavísur* is not clear. The response of saga-writers and others to Olaf was ambivalent; his posthumous reputation for piety and his sanctification may have been a response to contemporary politics (Lindow 2008). The *History of Norway* recounted Olaf's youth, his piracy in the Baltic before his conversion to Christianity, his campaign with Svein Forkbeard in England, and his raiding in England and Iberia (*History of Norway*: xiii, 24; Anderssen 2006: 45). A *Passion and Miracles of Olaf*, composed before 1200, recorded a miracle involving two brothers from Galicia, who travelled to the shrine of St. Olaf to do penance for matricide and the burning down of a monastery (*History of Norway*: trans.: 59, xxvi). Olaf's campaign in Iberia was retold in much greater detail by the historian Snorri Sturluson (1178/9–1241), an Icelandic nobleman and the author of several works in Old Norse prose and poetry on history and mythology. *Heimskringla* (*The Circle of the World*), which Snorri began writing

in 1220–1235, narrated the history of the Norwegian kings from Odin to 1177, incorporating material from earlier histories, although the relationship between them is complicated (Hill 2011: 189; Anderssen 2006: 59). According to Snorri, following a campaign in Francia, in 1014 Olaf sailed west to *Grislupollar* and *Fetlafjord*; the first of these two toponyms, both taken from *Vikingavísur*, has tentatively been identified with Castropol on the north coast of Spain and *Fetlafjord*, even more tentatively with *Farum Brecantium*/A Coruña (Fell 1981: 119–120).

> From there King Olaf sailed all the way south to *Seljupollar* (perhaps Guardia, at the mouth of the river Miño) and fought a battle there. He conquered the castle called *Gunnvaldsborg* (perhaps Tuy: Gundisalvus borgus/the city of González) – it was large and old – and there he captured the earl who was in command there, called Geirfrith. Then he had a meeting with the townspeople and imposed a ransom on them for freeing the earl – 12,000 gold shillings; and that sum was paid by the townspeople as he demanded.
>
> Thereupon King Olaf proceeded with his fleet west into *Karlsá* harried there and had a battle. Now when King Olaf lay in *Karlsá* waiting for a favourable breeze to sail to the Norva Sound (the Straits of Gibraltar) and thence to Jerusalem, he dreamed a remarkable dream – that a man of commanding appearance, handsome, but also terror-inspiring, approached him and spoke to him, bidding him to give up his intention of proceeding further out into the world: 'Return to your own possessions, because you shall be king of Norway forever.' He understood this dream to mean that he would be king in the land and his descendants kings after him for a long time.
>
> (Snorri Sturluson *Heimskringla*: trans.: 257)

A voyage to Jerusalem, with raids on Iberia and the Mediterranean was an element of several sagas. The germ of the story is of going a-Viking whilst waiting to take up power at home. There was no better way to do this than a pilgrimage or a crusade, even if that involved a little looting on the way. The journeys became literary constructs, a 'road paved with legends' (Lönnroth 1990); 'the very distance lends prestige, as does also the exceptionally high status of the foreign rulers who are shown to accept the Scandinavian visitors as equals' (Hill 1993: 437). The compiler of the *Ágrip* outlined Sigurd's voyage to the Holy Land, where he arrived in 1109:

> King Sigurd travelled abroad to Jerusalem with sixty ships. He had with him a large and goodly company, though only those who wanted to go. He stayed in England the first winter and spent the next on the journey to Jerusalem, where he was received with great honour and given splendid treasures . . . He won victories over several heathen towns and vowed to ban the eating of meat on Saturdays in Norway if he took one of them . . . He went to Miklegard [Constantinople] and received much honour there from the emperor's reception and great gifts . . . He returned to Norway through Hungary, Saxony and Denmark three years after he had left, and all the people rejoiced at his return.
>
> (*Ágrip*: trans.: 71–75)

A longer version of Sigurd's story was preserved in *Morskinskinna*, a collection of kings' sagas dated to *c.* 1217–1222; the earliest manuscript is *c.* 1275. After his stay in England, Sigurd spent the next winter in Santiago, whence he 'headed his fleet . . . for Spain'. Following a battle with pirates (*Vikingar*):

> King Sigurd laid siege to the castle called Sintra. It is located in Spain and had been occupied by the heathens. They used it as a stronghold from which to raid the Christians . . . After that King Sigurd and his men departed and proceeded westward along the coast of Spain until they reached the town called Lisbon. That town was half heathen and half Christian. To the west and south of that town lies heathen Spain and that marks the dividing line from Christian Spain . . . [Sigurd attacked and took Lisbon] . . . King Sigurd again proceeded with his troops to a heathen town in Spain called Alcacer do Sal . . . He killed many heathens in it and took all the treasure in the town and wasted it.
>
> (*Morskinskinna*: trans.: 317)

The king sailed on through the Straits of Gibraltar, along the coast of 'Serkland' (North Africa), where he met pirates again, harrying Formentera, Ibiza and Minorca but sparing Sicily because it was Christian, before arriving in Jerusalem and Constantinople. The Viking tropes are reversed; appropriately for a story ostensibly about Crusaders, it is now Sigurd and his men who are the scourge of God, but against pagans. It is clear from Snorri Sturluson's reworking of the saga of Sigurd (Snorri Sturluson *Heimskringla:* trans.: 689–695) that Snorri considered the *Vikingar*, the pirates whom Sigurd encountered off the coast of Iberia, as Muslims, the same people he defeated in al-Andalus and tried to convert to Christianity.

Morskinskinna may also be the origin of the story of another expedition to the Holy Land, by Rognvald of Orkney, Erling and Endrith in 1151–1152, 'along the same route Sigurd the Jerusalem-farer had followed, all the way to Norva Sound, harrying far and wide about heathen Spain' (*Morskinskinna*: trans.: 389; Snorri Sturluson *Heimskringla*: trans.: 689; *Fagrskinna*: trans.: 253–254). It was preserved in several sagas and in skaldic poetry (Jesch 2009). If the itinerary of the second expedition, and that of a King Erik, who died in Cyprus on his way to the Holy Land in 1103, sound a little formulaic, this may be because these stories were inspired by historical events of the Crusading period such as the siege of Lisbon in 1147 and the capture of Silves by German crusaders in 1197. There is no evidence outside the sagas that Sigurd went to Iberia; *Ágrip*, the earliest account of his reign, does not mention it. The *Orkneyinga Saga* and *Knýtlinga saga* link Rognvald's and Erik's journeys with Sigurd's, both overtly, and by literary imitation (Hill 1993). According to the *Orkneyinga Saga*, Rognvald of Orkney sailed 'south beyond England and over to France, and there's nothing to tell of their travels till they reached a seaport called Narbonne' (*Orkneyinga Saga*: trans.: 148). Here Rognvald flirted with the queen, and wrote her a verse; it was the behaviour expected of voyaging poets, as al-Ghazāl had demonstrated. The saga-writer's ignorance of geography has the northerners sailing next to 'Galicia in the west' although the goal of the expedition is Jerusalem. In Galicia, Rognvald, Erling and Eindrith helped the local population to smoke a foreign tyrant out of his fortress before continuing south to al-Andalus, 'looting all over the pagan areas and winning a great deal of plunder there' (*Orkneyinga Saga*: trans.: 153). They sailed towards the coast of North Africa and, after many adventures, which included capturing and burning a Saracen galley off Sardinia, they reached Jerusalem. In Byzantium, they were received by the emperor and the Varangians, sailing on 'as they knew Sigurd the pilgrim had done' via Durazzo to Puglia and then returning home overland. 'This journey became very famous and everyone who made it was considered all the greater' (*Orkneyinga Saga*: trans.: 162).

Our idea of Vikings has a lot to do with the rediscovery of Norse sagas like these, with their glorification of violence even in the context of pilgrimage and crusade. Heirs to Walter Scott and the Victorians, we have been become inclined to privilege Vikings above all other pirates active in the early Middle Ages, even to find their ravages romantic (Wawn 2000). Medieval Iberian

authors with widely varied origins also enjoyed telling tall tales about Vikings. Vikings remained a significant 'Other' long after their fellow-Scandinavians had integrated into the society of Anglo-Saxon England and elsewhere in Europe (Nelson 2003: 13). This was more than simply finding a bogey-man to deploy in propaganda for church reform, for the rulers of Asturias and Leon-Castile and for the Umayyads in al-Andalus, although it was certainly all of these things. The Iberian sources confirm that the semiotics of Vikings/piracy is not purely a modern phenomenon. It may have been reworked in the nineteenth century (Nelson 2003) but it had already developed in the medieval period. This is clearer from the Arabic than from the Latin sources, because of the former's bias towards story-telling, and because Muslim scholars were primed by their education in Greek geography to write imaginatively about the men from the North. Yet the Muslim literary response to Vikings is not of a different order to that of the Christians. Indeed, it is sometimes easier to demonstrate this approach in the Latin sources because some of them were written within living memory of the events they chronicled and because Vikings were linked in the writers' minds with the Muslim enemy to their south, to the extent that it is often unclear which of the two enemies is meant. In length and detail, the Arabic sources fall somewhere between the annals of northern Iberia and the fictions of the saga-writers. Writing the Vikings in Arabic was, like writing sagas, 'probably part of the Zeitgeist that elsewhere produced romances' (Clunies Ross 2010: 46). We treat these types of material differently because we have moved them to different parts of the library.

As in the memories of chroniclers elsewhere in Europe, so Vikings in the South got a bad press because they came out of the blue, and because, although the damage caused by any individual raid may have been small – except to the communities affected – it was difficult to get over the shock of their appearance on the horizon. Hence the memories of Don Teudo Rico's defence of Luarca, the prayers of bishop Gonzalo that sank a Viking fleet, the defence of Seville by a miraculous boy that Ibn al-Qūṭīya described, the 'red birds' sailing out of the western ocean in the mind's eye of Ibn Idhārī. For Iberian chroniclers, just as much as for writers in distant Morocco and Iceland, the story of Vikings was 'chronicle noir', a Scandinavian crime serial, that, paradoxically, appealed to audiences whether on the 'side' of the perpetrators or of the victims. But it was also history, composed when the marauders had long departed, when the

stories served new purposes but were, most importantly, meant to be believed. If the denizens of Iberia's coasts and riverbanks in the later Middle Ages thrilled to the tales of Viking odysseys, we may assume that in the ninth to eleventh centuries they had been less interested in the origins of the ships that plagued their coasts than in strengthening their defences against pirates of all kinds and in scraping together a ransom.

APPENDIX 1

Glossary of Histories and Historians

Al-Bakrī (d.?Cordoba 1095) belonged to the family who ruled the taifa kingdom of Huelva after the collapse of the Umayyad caliphate. His geography, *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik* (*Book of Roads and Kingdoms*), composed in 1067–1068 in Almeria, survives in several manuscripts.

The ***Annals of St-Bertin*** are the court chronicle of the West Frankish kings for the period 830–882. Prudentius, a Spaniard who became bishop of Troyes and chaplain to Louis the Pious, was responsible for the section between 835–861. The first manuscript, copied in the tenth or eleventh century, and found at the Benedictine Abbey of St-Bertin near Thérouanne, also has the *Annals of St-Vaast*, compiled after 891.

'Arīb ibn Sa'īd, known as al-Kātib (the Secretary) was active at the court of al-Ḥakam II (961–976). Works in several genres survive, including a treatise on obstetrics and part of a *Chronicle*, composed *c.* 967, which **Ibn Ḥayyān** and **Ibn Idhārī** cited at length. The surviving section of the *Chronicle*, in a unique manuscript dated 1220, covers the period 904–932.

The ***Chronicle of Albelda*** was probably compiled at the Asturian royal court in Oviedo. It was named after the tenth-century manuscript found at Albelda, although a longer tenth-century version survives from San Millán de la Cogolla. It is a chronicle of the Asturian rulers to 881 with a continuation, the so-called *Prophetic Chronicle*, a list of the Muslim governors and emirs of Spain and a prediction that Muslim rule in the peninsula would end in 883.

The ***Chronicle of Alfonso III*** gives an account of the Visigothic and Asturian rulers from the accession of Wamba in 672 to Alfonso III (866–910), who may have commissioned it. It survives in two versions, the *Rotense* and the *Ad Sebastianum*, which may both date to the end of the ninth century, although the earliest surviving manuscript of the first is late tenth-century, and of the second sixteenth-century.

Dudo of St-Quentin (?965–?1043) was canon of the church of Saint-Quentin in Normandy. His *Gesta de moribus et actibus primorum Normanniae ducum*, a panegyric of the dukes of Normandy, was written between 996 and 1015. It was the principal source for later historians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, such as

William of Jumièges, who started writing his own *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* in *c.* 1050.

The ***Estoria de Espanna*** is the first history of the whole of Spain, from its foundation by Hercules to the conquest of Cordoba in 1236. It was commissioned by Alfonso X (1252–1284) of Castile and Leon and put together many earlier histories and epic poems. Thirty-five manuscripts survive, although none of them is complete.

Al-Ḥimyarī may have been an Andalusi exiled to North Africa, active in the fourteenth or early fifteenth century. His geographical dictionary, the *Kitāb al-Rawḍal-mi'tār* (*Book of the Perfumed Gardens*), has 1,650 entries, of which some ten per cent deal with al-Andalus. It is largely based on the work of al-Idrīsī, but with additional information, mostly anecdotal, of unknown origin.

The ***Historia Compostellana*** is an account of the accomplishments of Diego Gelmírez, bishop (1110–1120) and subsequently archbishop (1120–1140) of Santiago de Compostela, together with a number of documents. It was compiled by five or more of Gelmírez' contemporaries, and survives in manuscripts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The ***Historia Silense*** may have been composed in Leon *c.* 1118, but the earliest manuscript is fifteenth-century and is badly corrupted. Some of the missing folios were replaced by the *Chronicle of Sampiro* covering the years 866–999. Although intended as a biography of Alfonso VI (1065–1109), the *Silense* ends with the death of his father Fernando I.

A History of Norway was written in Latin towards the end of the twelfth century. Only the first section survives, up to the accession of Olaf Haraldsson in 1015, in a manuscript of *c.* 1500. The writer, perhaps active in royal or episcopal circles in Oslo, is preoccupied with the Christianization of Norway and with the activities of Olaf Tryggvason and Olaf Haraldsson.

Ibn al-Athīr (1160–1233) was born in Mosul, Iraq, and travelled to Syria, where he was attached to the army of Saladin. His most famous work *Al-Kāmil fī al-tār'īkh* (*The Complete Book of History*) began with an abridgement of the *History of the Prophets and Kings* of al-Ṭabarī (to 914) and continued to 1230. He abandoned al-Ṭabarī's practice of giving long chains of authorities for his reports, making his history more readable.

Ibn Ḥabīb (d.853) was active in Egypt and at the court of 'Abd al-Raḥmān II. His *History* (*Kitāb al–Ta'rīkh*) runs from creation to *c.* 888 and was probably compiled by one of his students. He was a prominent legal scholar, whose judgements were collected by later scholars. Works in several genres survive.

Ibn Ḥawqal, born in Iraq, was a geographer who travelled to al-Andalus in 948 and the Maghreb in 951–952. His *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* (*Description of the World*) was written

in the form of an itinerary, but was based on earlier works, even for the parts of the world that Ibn Ḥawqal himself had visited.

Ibn Ḥayyān (987–1076) was born in Umayyad Cordoba and active in the period of the small taifa kingdoms. He is remembered for the *Muqtabas*, a compilation of the works of earlier historians in ten volumes covering the history of al-Andalus from the conquest of 711 to the author's lifetime. Only the sections covering 796–880, 912–942 and 971–975 survive. He also wrote an original work, the *Kitāb al-Matīn*, which was lost, although Ibn Bassām (d.1147/8) cited substantial sections of it.

Ibn Idhārī al-Marrākushī (*c.* 1250–1320) was a judge in Fes. His *Kitāb al-bayān al-mughrib fī akhbār muluk al-Andalus wa-l-maghrib* is a chronicle of the rulers of al-Andalus and the Maghreb from 641–1269 in three parts, of which the second covers the history of al-Andalus to 1085–1086. It is mostly structured as a biography of each ruler and an annalistic account of his reign enlivened by anecdotes. Some of it was based on the *Chronicle* of **'Arīb ibn Sa'īd**.

Al-Idrīsī (d.1164 or 1165) travelled in Asia Minor before settling in Norman Sicily under Roger II (1130–1154), for whom he wrote *Nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ijtirāq al-afaq* (*Recreation for Those who Wish to Travel the World*), also known as the *Book of Roger*. It is a geographical description, mainly of the Islamic world, which was much copied and illustrated with maps. The work is enlivened with anecdotes, some of them of historical value.

Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406) was born in Tunis and served the state both in al-Andalus and the Maghreb before retiring to write his monumental *Kitāb al-'Ibār*. The first volume, known as the *Muqaddima* (*Introduction*) has been much studied for theories of history and the evolution of societies and dynasties. The second part deals with the history of the Arabs from pre-Islamic Arabia to the author's own time.

Ibn al-Qūṭīya (d.977), probably from a family of Christian converts to Islam, was a grammarian active at the Córdoban court. His *Ta'rīkh iftitāḥ al-Andalus* (*History of the Conquest of al-Andalus*) covers the period 756–961; it may have been compiled by a pupil.

Al-Mas'ūdī (*c.* 893–956) was born in Baghdad and travelled through many countries between the Maghreb and India. Of the works that survive, the multi-volume *Kitāb Murūj al-Dhahab* (*Book of the Meadows of Gold*) and the much shorter *Kitāb at-Tanbiḥ wa-l-Ishrāf* are epitomes of much longer works. Both are universal histories from Adam to current times, within encyclopaedic surveys of geography and of the religious beliefs of pre-Islamic peoples and references to al-Mas'ūdī's own travels.

Al-Rāzī, Aḥmad (d.955) **and his son 'Isā'** were historians at the court of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III (912–961) and al-Ḥakam II (961–976). Most of their work survives only in citation by later historians, particularly **Ibn Ḥayyān**. A chronicle and

itinerary of al-Andalus composed by Aḥmad al-Rāzī was translated into Portuguese and then into Castilian and survives as the *Crónica del moro Rasis*; the historical segment was rewritten in the fourteenth century.

Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (*c.* 1170–1247), archbishop of Toledo (1209–1247) commissioned a series of histories of the successive invaders of Spain from Hercules to the Arabs. The *Historia de rebus Hispanie sive Historia Gothica*, which exists in two major redactions from 1243 and 1247 is an account of the triumph of the Goths in Spain, culminating in Alfonso VIII's defeat of the Almohads at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212. The *Historia Arabum*, which begins with the life of Muḥammad and the rise of Islam, was compiled in 1245, based on a translation of an unknown Arabic source.

Saxo Grammaticus (*c.* 1160–after 1208) came from the Danish nobility and was educated abroad, perhaps in Northern France. His *Gesta Danorum* (*The History of the Danes*) from the eponymous Dan to 1185 is the most important medieval Latin history of Scandinavia, although it survives in a printed edition of 1514. Saxo's main themes were the Christianization of Denmark and the independence of his country from the Holy Roman Empire.

Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241) was an Icelandic nobleman involved in the political struggles for the control of Iceland. He was the author of several works in Old Norse prose and poetry on Norse history and mythology. *Heimskringla* (*The Circle of the World*) which Snorri began writing in 1220–1235, narrates the history of the Norwegian kings from Odin to 1177. It exists in a large number of manuscripts, although most are incomplete.

Al-ʻUdhrī (1003–1085) was born and died in Almería, but travelled in the Middle East. He wrote a comprehensive geography of the Islamic world which several later authors cited, but under different titles. Only a fragment survives, relating to several towns and regions of al-Andalus. In addition to geographical data, al-ʻUdhrī included historical anecdotes and accounts of marvels.

Al-Ya'qūbī (d. after 905) was born in Baghdad and died in Egypt, having travelled in the East. He wrote a universal history of the Islamic world, starting with creation. His *Book of Countries* (*Kitāb al-buldān*) is a work of geography based partly on the author's travels.

APPENDIX 2

Timeline

Vikings in the South	The Viking World
	c. 705 Foundation of Ribe
	737 Central section of Danevirke constructed
	c. 750 Foundation of Birka and Staraja Ladoga
	793 Raid on Lindisfarne
	799 Vikings attack Noirmoutier
	810 Viking fleet attacks Frisia
	834–837 Annual raids on Dorestad
	840 Vikings over-winter in Ireland
844 Raids on Galicia and al-Andalus	844 Raids on Garonne and Toulouse
845 Fortification of Seville	851 Vikings winter on Thanet
	852 Vikings winter in the Seine valley
859–861 Expedition to Iberia and the Mediterranean	860 *Rūs* attack Constantinople
	866 Vikings occupy York
	c. 870 Vikings begin to settle in Iceland
	c. 880 Oleg gains control of Kiev
	896 Army in England disbands
	902 Vikings expelled from Ireland
	911 Vikings led by Rollo settle around Rouen
c. 964–966 Raid on Lisbon	*c.* 965 Harald Bluetooth converts to Christianity
968 Viking attack on Santiago	
971–972 Viking attacks on al-Andalus	
	1000 Iceland accepts Christianity *c.* 1000 Vinland discovered
1014 King Olaf sails to Jerusalem via Spain	

Vikings in the South	The Viking World
1015 Vikings over-winter between Douro and Ave	
1016 Vikings raid province of Braga	
c. 1028 Raid of Ulf on Galicia	
1032 Mercenaries fight for Vermudo III	
1060s Cresconio fortifies Santiago	
1107–1108 Sigurd travels to Jerusalem	
1151–1152 Erling, Eindrith and Rognvald reach Jerusalem	

Abbreviations

AB	*Annales Bertiniani*, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH SS, 1, Hannover (1828): 532–536; trans. J.L. Nelson, *The Annals of St-Bertin*, Manchester Medieval Sources, Manchester: Manchester University Press (1991).
CCCM	*Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis*, Turnhout: Brepols.
CSIC	Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.
DHEE	*Diccionario de Historia Ecclesiastica de España*, Q. Aldea Vaquero, T. Marin Martinez Tomás and J. Vives Gatell (eds), 4 vols, Madrid: Instituo Enrique Flórez, CSIC (1972–1975).
EI	*The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* prepared by a number of leading orientalists. New edition, edited by an editorial committee consisting of H.A.R. Gibb *et al.* under the patronage of the International Union of Academies, Leiden: E.J. Brill (1960–).
EMC	*Encyclopaedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. G. Dumphy, 2 vols, Leiden: Brill (2010).
ES	*España Sagrada: theatro geographico-historico de la iglesia de España,* vols 1–27 ed. E. Flórez; vols 28–29 ed. M. Risco from manuscripts left by Flórez; vols 30–42 ed. M. Risco, Madrid: Rodríguez (1747–1918).
HC	*Historia Compostellana*, ed. E. Falque Rey, CCCM 70 (1988).
HE	*Historia de España, fundada por Ramón Menéndez Pidal*, Madrid: Espasa Calpe (1935–).
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica.* SRG *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, Hannover: Hahn (1840–). SS *Scriptores (in folio)*, Hannover: Hahn (1826–).
PL	*Patrologia Cursus Completa, Series Latina,* ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris (1841–1864).
PMH	*Portugaliae Monumenta Historica a saeculo octavo post Christum usque ad quintum decimum*, 3, *Diplomata et Chartae*, ed. A. Herculano de Carvalho e Araujo and J.J. da Silva Mendes Leal, vol.I, Lisbon (1868).

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Index

'Abd al-Raḥmān II 19, 25, 34–35, 38–41, 44–45, 51, 53, 64, 66, 73
'Abd al-Raḥmān III 7, 9, 36, 68
'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Marwān 'the Galician' 51
'Abd Allāh ibn Kulayb 39, 40
Abrams, Lesley 63
A Coruña see *Farum Brecantium*
adab 18
Adam of Bremen 15
Ado, bishop of Vienne 58
Ágrip 98, 100–102
Aḥmad al-Rāzī 36–38, 41, 49, 50, 64, 69, 107
Aimoin of St-Germain 33
A Lanzada, Pontevedra, 75
Alcacer do Sal 66, 68, 87, 101
Alcuin 2, 33
Alexandria 35, 53, 57
Alfonso II of Asturias 8, 19
Alfonso III of Asturias-Leon 32–33, 74, 80
Alfonso IV of Asturias-Leon 81
Alfonso V of Leon-Castile 77, 80, 97
Alfonso VI of Leon-Castile 42
Alfonso X of Castile 45, 52, 106
Algeciras 44, 49–50, 52–54
Almeria, 69, 73, 87, 90
Al-Andalus, wealth of 7–9
Anales Complutenses 89–90
Anales Toledanos 89–90
Annals of St-Bertin 30, 58–61, 105
Annals of St-Vaast 61
'Arīb ibn Sa'īd 41, 87, 105
Aṣīla, 54–55, 68
Astorga, embassy from 89
Asturias 9, 64 wealth of 9–11
Ataulfus II, bishop of Iria, 48

Al-Bakrī 26, 53–54, 66, 68, 71, 75, 105
Banū Qasī 34, 51, 64
Banū Ṣaliḥ, rulers of Nakūr, 53–55
Barbastro, capture of 22, 97
Basques 9, 19, 50, 52
Beja 39, 49–50
Bertha, queen of the Franks 27
Bjorn Ironside 61
Blue men 11, 56
Byzantium 6, 12, 24, 35, 53, 62, 102

Cadiz 38, 44
Camargue 58–59
Cape St. Vincent 69
Cardeña 11, 43
Carmona 38, 69
Castelo dos Mouros 75
Castelo Velho de Alcoutim 68
Celanova, see Rosendo
Chantada 80
Charlemagne 8, 42
Charles the Bald 22, 31, 33, 59
charters 12, 79, 82–83, 86
cheese–makers, Vikings as 4, 20–21
Chronica Naiarense 16, 83
Chronicle of Albelda 15, 31–32, 47, 105
Chronicle of Alfonso III 15, 32–33, 42, 47, 52, 59, 64, 105
Chronicle of Sampiro 83, 106
Chronicon Iriense 17, 47, 85
Chronicon Lusitanum 97
Chronicon Venetum 62
Clavijo, supposed battle of 43
coinage, Andalusi 8
Constantinople 25, 61, 101 see also Byzantium
Cordoba 9, 34, 38, 40–41, 51, 55, 67, 69, 79, 88, 92, 97
Coria 38, 68
Corriente, Federico 22, 39, 40
Covadonga 13
Coyanza, Council of, 86
Cresconio, bishop of Santiago, 75, 77–78, 86
Crónica del Moro Rasis 36

Diego Barreyro, King at Arms to Philip IV 13
Diego Gelmírez, archbishop of Santiago, 75, 77, 83
Diego Peláez, archbishop of Santiago, 86
dockyards 73
Don Teudo Rico 1, 13–14
Douro, river, 89, 96–97
Dozy, Reinhardt 3, 81, 97
Dudo of St-Quentin 60, 81–82, 106

Ebro, river 63
embassy to Cordoba 21
Encircling Ocean 15, 18
Erik Bloodaxe, 98
Erik, king 102
Erling and Endrith, see Rognvald
Ermentarius of Noirmoutier 38, 59
Estoria de Espanna see Alfonso X

Fagrskinna 99
Farum Brecantium 32–33, 43, 100
Fatimids, 73
fleet, Andalusi 49–50, 73, 87–88, 90
Flórez, Enrique 74, 86, 90
Formoso, Manuel 80
Fornelos 84
Fragmentary Annals 56
Francia 5–6, 49, 58–61, 63, 81, 100
Fuengirola 69

Galicia, development of 5; raids on 30–31,42–43, 45, 47–49, 73, 84–85, 102
García Iñiquez of Pamplona 50, 63–64
Gayangos, Pascual de 20
geography, Arabic 17–18
Ghālib ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān 88–92
Al-Ghazāl 25–27
Gijón 33
Gonzalvo, bishop 86
Guardamar del Segura, 71
Guillelmus Sánchez 84
Guimaraes, 76
Gundered, 83–84

hagiography 36
al-Ḥakam II 7, 36, 87–88, 90–92
Halsall, Guy 14
Hamilton, Michelle 26
Hasting 60
al-Ḥimyarī, 53, 69, 74, 106
Hishām, emir 19
Historia Compostellana 77–78, 83, 106
Historia Silense 42, 83, 106
History of Norway 98–99, 106
Honestum, see Torres del Oeste
huṣn 69, 71, 75

Ibn al-Athīr 19, 63, 106
Ibn al-Attār 20
Ibn Darrāj 26
Ibn Dihya 25–27
Ibn Fadlan 3
Ibn Ḥabīb 21, 67, 69, 107
Ibn Ḥawqal 3, 19–20, 55, 66, 107
Ibn Ḥayyān 19, 21, 37, 39–41, 44, 47–48, 50–52, 63, 68, 87–89, 91–92, 105, 107–108
Ibn Idhārī 1–2, 19–21, 29, 41–42, 49, 51, 54, 58, 64, 66, 86–88, 105
Ibn Khaldūn 19, 42, 54, 88, 92, 97, 107
Ibn Khuradādhbih 11
Ibn al-Quṭīya 33–41, 53, 59, 67, 73, 107
Ibn Rumahis, Andalusi admiral 88
Ibn Sa'īd the Maghrebi 27
Al-Idrīsī 5, 18, 66, 107
Al-Ifranj/ the land of the Franks 39, 49–50
Ireland 11, 56
Iria, 47
ʿĪsā al-Rāzī 36–39, 107
Italy 59–60, 97

Jilliqīya see Galicia
Jerusalem 12, 99–102
John the Deacon 62

Kafirūn 17
Khashkhāsh, Andalusi admiral 50

Latin-Arabic glossary of Leiden 20
Leon, San Isidoro 7, 42
Lévi-Provençal, Évariste 20–21, 41, 48
Liber chronicorum of Pelayo of Oviedo 83
Lisbon 6, 8–9, 38, 41–42, 44–45, 47, 66, 69, 75–76, 87–88, 101–102; Adventurers of 18–19
Liudprand of Cremona 24

Lodemanos, Lordemäo 16
Lordomani, Lormanorum, Lothomanni, Loclimanos etc. 15–16, 24, 47, 80, 86, 89–90
Lothlind, Laithlind, Lochlanns 16, 56
Louis the Pious 24
Luarca 1–2, 13–14, 32–33
Lubb b. Mūsā 38, 40, 51
Lugo 74, 98
Luni 58, 60–61

Madīnat al-Zahrā' 88–89, 92
Maghreb 35, 53, 56–57, 69, 71, 74
Majūs 17, 19–24 and *passim*
Makkī, Maḥmūd Alī 39, 49, 51
Majorca 48, 59, 73
al-Ma'mūn 17
al-Manṣūr 9, 26, 75, 82
al-Maqqarī 19
al-Marrakushī 37
al-Mas'ūdī 20, 22–23, 53, 107
McCormick, Michael 26
Menendo Gonzalez 97
mice, Scandinavian on Madeira 7
Miño, river 74, 81, 86
Minorca 48, 49, 73, 101
Morkinskinna 101–102
Monastir 71–72
Mondoñedo 10, 83, 86
Muḥammad, emir 49, 52–55, 73
Mūsā b. Mūsā 34, 36, 40, 51, 64
Mushrikūn 17, 19, 21, 87

Nakūr 42, 47, 53–55
Nantes 6, 38
Naṣr, Abūl-fatḥ 38–40
Navarre, kingdom of see Pamplona
Las Navas de Tolosa 13, 43
Niebla 39, 41, 66
Normanni, gens Normannorum, gens Nordomanorum 15–16 and *passim*
Normanos ac Fradenses 17, 75, 84
al-Nuwairī 19

Olaf Haraldsson/St. Olaf 98–100, 106
Olaf Tryggvason 98–99, 106
Ordoño I of Asturias 47, 52, 74, 80
Ordoño of Celanova, *Life* of Rosendo 85
Orihuela 49
Orkneyinga Saga 102
Ossonoba/Faro 66
Oviedo 9, 10, 74, 96

Palmela 67
Pamplona 9, 19, 39, 47, 50–51, 63, 64
Pechina 73
Peter, count of Galicia 31, 47, 73
Photios, patriarch of Constantinople 61–62
piracy in Iberia before Vikings 5; in the Mediterranean 57; Muslim/Saracen 57–59, 62, 73, 75, 78, 81
Pisa 60
polar bears 19
Porto 96
Prophetic Chronicle 32, 34, 105
Prudencio de Sandoval 13, 86
Prudentius of Troyes 30–32, 45, 58–59, 105

Qabtīl/Isla Menor 38, 69

Ragnall/ Ragnarr/ Ragnarr Loðbrók 56–57, 60–62
Ramiro I of Asturias 31–33, 42–43, 45, 78, 80
Ramiro III of Asturias–Leon 82–83
Rhône, pirates 58–59
ribāṭ 68–72, 75
Richard, duke of Normandy 81
Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada 29; *De rebus Hispanie* and *Historia Arabum* 43–45, 47, 52
Rognvald of Orkney, 102
Rome, not 60–61
Rosendo, bishop of Mondoñedo and Santiago, abbot of Celanova, 83, 85–86
runestones 12
Rūs 24, 30, 53, 61–62

Sāḍūn al-Surunbaqī 50–51
sailing, coastal 5
Saltes 66
San Carlos de la Rapita, 69
San Cibrian de Cálogo 29
San Juan de Coba 79
San Martin Pinario, Santiago 81
San Salvador de Moreira 96
Sancho I of Leon 83, 84

Sanlúcar de Barrameda 36
Santa Eulalia de Curtis 80
Santarem/ *Shantarīn* 89, 91
Santiago de Compostela 9, 11, 25, 43, 47, 75–77, 79–82, 84, 86, 91, 101, 106
Santiago/St. James 9, 43, 84
Ṣaqāliba 11, 20
Saracens see piracy, Muslim
Saxo Grammaticus 57, 62, 108
Septimania 19, 58
Serkland 12, 101
Setubal 68–69
Seville 9, 30, 34–35, 38, 41–42, 44–45, 49, 51, 53, 55, 66, 73, 87
Shantabarīya/ Santaver 89
Sidonia/*Sidūna* 38, 44, 50
Sigurd the Jerusalem-farer 100–102
Silves, 69, 87, 102
Sintra 75, 101
Sisnando II, bishop of Iria/Santiago 75, 83–84
slaves 11–12, 56–57, 62
Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla* 99–101, 108
Sobrado, monastery of, 81
Sousse, 71

Ṭalyāṭa/Ṭablada/Tejada, battle(s) of 38, 40–41
Torres del Oeste/*Honestum*, 76–78, 80, 84, 86
trading and raiding 4–5
Tuy 74, 80–81, 97, 100

al-ʻUdrī 39–40, 49, 51, 108
Ulf the Galician 98
al-Urmāniyyīn 21–22, 24, 37

Vasiliev, Alexander 62
Vega de Valcarce 84
Vermudo II of Leon 97
Vermudo III of Leon 98

walls, city 66
watch towers 68
William II Sanchez of Gascony 84
William of Jumièges 51, 106

al-Ya'qūbī, 31, 45, 55, 108

Ziyād ibn Aflah 91–92
Zoroastrians 20, 54
al-Zuhrī 17–18, 69